SOME OF THE PROPHET'S ADVECE

من وصايا الرسول ﷺ

by

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Umm Al-Qura

For Translation, Publishing & Distribution

First edition 1422 A.H./2002

Published by:

Umm Al-Qura

for Translation, Publishing & Distribution

Al-Mansura, Egypt

Tel: 050 2213889

Note on the Translation

The advice in this book concerns both boys and girls. The only exception is the instruction to prefer the first row in prayer, which is for men and boys. Both Arabic and English use the masculine pronoun "he" to refer to both males and females. To write "he or she", "his or her", etc. is awkward. Therefore the reader should understand that the advice herein is for the parents of all Muslim children, regardless of their sex.

❬ Allah commands you concerning your children ❭

Surat An-Nisa' 4:11

In the Name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah. We ask His forgiveness and seek refuge in Him from the evils of our souls and the mischief of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides will never be misled by anyone else, and whomever Allah misleads will never be guided by anyone else. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the One and that Muhammad is His Messenger and Servant.

The truest words are those of Allah's Book, and the best guidance is that of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

This book presents some of the Prophet's words of advice to the Muslim child. It contains his advice, commands and instructions. Our children are bounties from Allah. He entrusted us to protect them and bring them up in an Islamic manner that is directed by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Whenever our noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) learned that any of his Companions had been blessed with a baby, his face would shine with joy and he would pray for that baby. Also, whenever he passed by any

children sitting or playing, he would offer them his salutation: *salaam*.

Our children are dear to us and they are always in need of our care and guidance. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), whom Allah sent to be an instructor for people, offers our children in this book his words of advice that are full of light.

For Allah suffices us and He is the best guardian.

Abdul Aziz Al-Shinnawy

Children Must Gain Knowledge

Learning is the way to gain the knowledge that is the light to all hearts and minds. The first word that was revealed in the Qur'an is "*Iqra*" (Read), which occurs in Surat Al-`Alaq: ﴾Read: In the Name of your Lord Who created﴿ (Surat Al-`Alaq 96:1). So the word "Read" was the first light revealed to the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). All those who do not learn are considered dead, while those who learn are living.

Learning benefits man in this life and the life to come, and the one who learns can benefit others from what he knows. Allah says ﴾Say: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge"﴿ (Surat Ta-Ha 20:114) and ﴾Say: "Can those be equal, they who know and they who know not?"﴿ (Surat Az-Zumar 39:9) and ﴾Allah will raise up in rank those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge﴿ (Surat Al-Mujadalah 58:11) and ﴾Surely those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah alone﴿ (Surat Fatir 35:28). This *ayah* shows that the most Allah-fearing are those who are the most learned. The best behavior is also found in those who are best learned because they reach this degree of knowledge

through piety. The Companion Abud-Darda' said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say, "Whoever among you seeks a way of gaining knowledge, Allah will ease for him his way to Paradise, and the angels will spread their wings for the knowledge seeker out of satisfaction for what he is doing. All inhabitants of the skies and the earth, even the fish in the sea, ask Allah's forgiveness for the scholar. The excellence of the scholar over the worshiper is like the excellence of the moon over the rest of the planets. The scholars are the heirs of prophets because prophets did not leave behind them any wealth of dinars or dirhams (money), but they left behind a wealth of knowledge. So whoever has taken from their inheritance has taken a big share." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Seeking knowledge was made desirable by making it a method of facilitating the way to Paradise, which is difficult enough. The one who yearns for Paradise has to avoid tens of errors and to overcome tens of the desires of the heart. But Allah makes it easier for the knowledge seeker so that it is not as difficult for him as for others. The angels carry him gently on their wings and raise him above all those errors and

desires. In addition, there are those inhabitants of the skies and the earth — even the fish and whales in the sea — who ask Allah's forgiveness for the scholar, who is higher in rank than a worshiper.

When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) died, people started to be busy with life and worldly gains. The Prophet's Companion Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari was disturbed by this new preoccupation. He stood on a rock and shouted, "O people, are you busy with your money and trade while Muhammad's inheritance is being distributed in the mosque?" People started to run wildly to the mosque, but they only found a person prostrating and another bowing. They also found a worshiper, a scholar and a student. They returned to Abu Dhar and told him, "We didn't find anything of what you had told us about!" He answered them in order to remind them of what they had forgotten, "What you saw is Muhammad's inheritance."

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Learn knowledge and learn how to learn it with respect and tranquility, and humble yourselves to your teachers." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). Also, Anas ibn

Malik, the Prophet's servant, reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever among you goes out for learning, he is in the cause of Allah[1] till he comes back." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

If we let our children read the biography of Imam Muhammad Idris Ash-Shafi`i, they will realize how intelligent he was. When he wanted to learn a book by heart, he would cover the left page so that he would not memorize it at a glance before the right page! [Remember Arabic is written from right to left.] When he was a young boy of seven, he used to attend the class of Imam Malik in Madinah in the mosque where the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is buried. Imam Malik, while reading the hadiths of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to his students, used to point at the grave and say, "So-and-so narrated from the one in that grave...." One day while he was turning to the grave, he glanced at Ash-Shafi`i, who was holding a straw

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[1]- In this hadith the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) compares learning to the noblest principle of Islam, which is jihad (fighting in cause of Allah). (translator)

that he had taken from the straw mat and wetting it with his saliva. He appeared to his teacher to be playing with the straw in his hand. Imam Malik was sad to see this. After he had finished teaching the people forty hadiths, he called the boy and said, "You, Muhammad ibn Idris!" The boy went to his master and sat down. Imam Malik started to criticize him saying, "Why were you playing while I was reciting the Prophet's hadiths?" The boy answered, "I was not playing, sir. I was writing what you said on my hand with my saliva so that I wouldn't forget it. I'm too poor to buy a pen and paper." Imam Malik was amazed and said, "If you are true, read me one of the hadiths that I taught you today." Ash-Shafi`i copied his master in the way he pointed at the grave and said, "So-and-so narrated from the one in that grave..." and he recited the whole forty hadiths.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) knew that his people were poor and he was always praying for them saying, "O Allah, my people are hungry, so feed them; and they are naked, so cover them with clothes." Despite this extreme poverty, the Prophet did not ask for money as a ransom for the war prisoners in the Battle of Badr, but instead

he asked that each prisoner should teach ten Muslims in return for his freedom.

Islam made education obligatory. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Seeking knowledge is a religious duty (*fard*) on every Muslim." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). The word "Muslim" in this hadith includes males and females alike. One day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made a speech. He said, "How about some people who do not teach or preach their neighbors, they do not want to enjoin on them what is good or forbid them from what is evil? And how about some people who do not want to learn or take advice from their neighbors? By Allah, unless people teach their neighbors and their neighbors learn and take advice, I will hasten their punishment." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Whoever concealed his knowledge from people to benefit from it, Allah will fetter him with a fetter of fire on the Day of Judgment." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

These facts — that seeking knowledge is obligatory on each Muslim male and female, that the one who is reluctant to seek knowledge is threatened to be punished by Shari`ah

(Islamic Law), and that the one who hides his knowledge from others will have a fetter of fire on the Day of Judgment — prove that Islam encourages education and makes it free for people. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) — as all prophets before him — established this principle of free education. The Qur'an says ❮And I do not ask you for any reward for it, surely my reward is only with the Lord of The Worlds❯ (Surat Ash-Shu`araa 26:109).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When the son of Adam dies, all his deeds in life terminate except for three: a continuing charity that he left, useful knowledge that he left for people to benefit from, and a good son who prays for him after he dies." (Narrated by Muslim).

Children should be taught to respect their teachers. Every boy and girl is required to grow up with those manners towards their education, especially if the educators are known to be pious and noble.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) — who himself is the educator of all humanity — established the principles of honoring scholars and teachers. He enlightened people on the excellence of educators and directed their students to remain polite with them. He said, "He is not one of us (the Muslims) who does not respect our elder and have mercy on our youngster and give our scholar his due respect." (Narrated by Ahmad). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "There are three things whose value is not underestimated except by a hypocrite: the Muslim white head (old man), the one who has knowledge, and the just imam (ruler)." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "I hope I don't reach a time when no one follows the steps of scholars, and when the gentle and patient people are not treated moderately. At that time the hearts of people will be those of foreigners though their tongues are those of Arabs." (Narrated by Ahmad). It is also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) collected every two martyrs of Uhud in one piece of cloth, then asked, "Which of them knew more of the Qur'an?" When one of them was pointed out for him,

he would put that one first in the grave. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Therefore, the student should be modest and should humble himself to his teachers and should not disobey their instructions. He should be like a patient to his intelligent doctor. He should consult and satisfy his teachers and should consider his humbleness towards his teachers something to be proud of.

Imam Ash-Shafi`i was once criticized for being overly modest with the scholars, so he answered in the following lines of poetry:

I humble myself to them

This is my way to win honor.

The venerable scholar Ibn `Abbas respected the scholars. He was once walking while Zaid ibn Thabit was riding on his camel. Ibn `Abbas offered to drive the camel. Ibn Thabit said, "Don't do that, please, Prophet's cousin."

Ibn `Abbas answered, "We are told to do that with our scholars."

Ibn Thabit said, "Give me your hand."

Ibn `Abbas did and Ibn Thabit kissed his hand and said, "We are told to do that with our Prophet's family members."

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal once said to Khalaf Al-Ahmar, "I don't sit anywhere except between your hands[2]. We are directed to humble ourselves to those who educate us."

Also, Ash-Shafi`i said, "When I sat with Imam Malik to learn, I turned the pages very lightly so as not to disturb him by the sound."

In turn, Ash-Shafi`i's student Ar-Rabi` said, "I never dared to drink water in front of Ash-Shafi`i out of reverence to him."

One day a son of the Caliph Al-Hadi came to Shuraik, a scholar. He leaned against the wall and started asking Shuraik about a hadith. The scholar did not look at him. The son repeated the question and the scholar kept ignoring him. The

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[2]- The teacher would sit on a chair or platform while the students sat on the floor in front of him. (editor)

caliph's son said, "Do you treat the children of the caliphs with such contempt?"

Shuraik said, "No, but knowledge is too valuable for me to waste." He referred to the impolite way the boy was standing.

The student should not call his teacher by his name alone, but should use a title such as Mr. or Ms., Brother or Sister, or a title alone such as sir or ma'am, Brother or Sister. Such titles should also be used when talking about the teacher in his or her absence.

In addition to this, the student should be thankful and grateful to his teacher. Ahmad Shawky, the poet laureate, wrote:

Stand up for your teacher

And pay him his due respect,

He's like a prophet or a preacher

In honor, a fact we can't suspect.

As his work is to feature

Minds and make them perfect.

A student should concentrate fully on his teacher. He should not look around or get distracted by any noise, or even keep moving his hands or feet. He should not laugh for no reason. If there is a reason, he should not laugh but only smile. A student should not enter the teacher's house or classroom before asking permission. He should knock at the door gently but not more than three times.

A student should start the lesson with a clear mind that is not preoccupied by any emotions so that he gets the full understanding of what he learns. If the student reaches the teacher's place and does not find him, he should wait but not wake the teacher up.

Ibn `Abbas used to sit at the door of his teacher, Zaid ibn Thabit, when he was sleeping and when someone would ask him, "Do you want me to wake him up for you?" he would answer in the negative and preferred to wait till he got sunburned.

Islam makes education desirable to people. Seeking knowledge is a religious duty no matter what sex or race the child is because the true advanced society is the one whose individuals are educated and knowledgeable.

Children are required to be independent. The right of the parents to direct and instruct their children should not lead to the devastation of the child's personality so that in the end he becomes passive, waiting for his parents to think for him and regulate his life. The limits that Islam put for the parents' role is to monitor and follow up from a distance the child's behavior at school so that he does not become hesitant in his personal life.

The child's participation in decision-making, however silly, simple or out of context his opinion might be, shapes his character in a better way. The following are some of the benefits of this method:

- To make the child accustomed to having an opinion in the various problems and to react towards them;
- To explain to the child the errors in his opinion in a way that teaches him how to reach a better decision;
- To make the child listen to the adults' opinions, which will teach him how to make a decision;
- To make the child get accustomed to appropriate ways of discussing and reaching correct answers;

- To overcome simple mindedness and weak personality in some children.

An example of this type of independent life is this incident that happened to `Abdullah ibn `Umar when he was young. He narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Among the trees there is a tree, the leaves of which do not fall and it is like the Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree." Everybody started thinking about the trees of the desert areas. And I thought of the date-palm tree, but I felt shy. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then replied, "It is the date- palm tree." After my father and I had left, I said to him, "I knew the answer before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said it." Then my father (`Umar ibn Al-Khattab) told me, "If you had given the answer it would have been better to me than any wealth in the world."

The aim of educating children in Islam is to attain both benefit and happiness, not only for the individuals but also for the whole society.

I pray to Allah to make us benefit from knowledge so that we can benefit others as well.

Beware of a Child's Bad Company

A child must always seek the faithful companion or friend, as he or she has a great influence upon his own character and values. There is a proverb that says, The friend trails you on his way. Another proverb says, If you want to know who I am, ask who my friend is. A poet says this with the same meaning:

Don't ask about the one,

Ask about his companion.

As everyone likes to follow,

The footsteps of his fellow.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The similitude of good company and of bad company is that of the owner of musk and the iron smith blowing bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you free of charge or you would buy it from him or you would smell its pleasant odor; and as for the one who blows the bellows, he would either burn your clothes or you will have to smell its repugnant smell." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and

blessings be upon him) said, "Beware of the bad friend, as you are known for him." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir).

Therefore, good company makes the child a future balanced person who is capable of serving society in the way that pleases Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Everyone adheres to the customs of his friend; therefore, one should be careful about whom to befriend." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Childhood and adolescence are the crucial phases in a person's life, as they shape the future personality. School friends are the most continuing and impressive to the child. Therefore, if the school friend is good his friend will follow his way. In both serious and fun situations, one is influenced by his friend, whether he is good or bad. The manners of such a friend penetrate deeper and deeper into one's soul till they take hold of it and, consequently, one is either guided to the right way or goes astray.

This is why I advise youngsters to refrain from taking bad friends. They only have to keep to the good friend who encourages them to do what is right and forbids them from doing what is wrong. There is a story with this meaning that

tells about a man who wanted to teach his son a lesson. He brought a box full of apples and put a rotten one among them and told his son, "We'll see what happens to the whole box after a few days." After some days the terrible smell of rottenness filled the place. Then the father opened the box and the son saw that all the apples had turned rotten. The father said, "This will be the situation of whoever mixes with a bad or evil friend."

It is the duty of parents and teachers to help boys and girls — especially when they are grown up enough — select their friends who are in their age group, so that they can spend their time, play and study together and visit one another, help one another in sickness, give presents to one another on happy occasions, remind one another when they forget, and support one another.

Rules of Companionship

1. Love for the Sake of Allah[3]

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't rush in loving your friend, as he may turn (into) your enemy one day. And don't rush in hating your enemy, as he may turn (into) your friend one day." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If a man associates himself as a brother with another man, he should first ask him about his and his father's names; this fosters good feelings among them." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If you associate yourself as a brother with somebody, ask him first about his and his father's names, respect him when he is absent, visit him when he is sick, and attend his funeral when he dies." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

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[3]- To love for the sake of Allah means to love your friend as long as he obeys Allah, whereas to hate for the sake of Allah means to hate him when he turns astray from the way of guidance. (translator)

A child also has to let his friend know about his feelings towards him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whenever any one of you loves a friend for the sake of Allah, he has to let him know this." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The same hadith was narrated by the Companion Abu Dharr as follows: "Whenever any one of you loves a friend, he must go to his house specially to tell him that." (Narrated by Ahmad). In the following hadith the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) tells us about the characteristics of one's best friend: "The best friend is the one who helps you at the time you remember Allah and reminds you at the time you forget Him." (Narrated by Ibn Abud-Dunya).

Again, Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The best companion is the one who when you see him you remember Allah, when he talks he adds to your knowledge, and when you see his deeds you remember the Hereafter." (Narrated by Ibn `Abbas). Another hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) says, "Don't be in the company of any except the believer, and don't let anybody eat from your food except the pious." (Narrated by Ahmad).

There is also the story of a man who asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Messenger of Allah, who among our companions is considered a good one?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "The one who when you see him you remember Allah, when he talks he adds to your knowledge, and when you see his deeds you remember the Hereafter."

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was asked another time. "Prophet of Allah, who should we take for our acquaintance?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "The one whose words increase your knowledge, his deeds incite you to long for the Hereafter, and the way he behaves encourages you to renounce the pleasure of this life." (Narrated by Ibn An-Najjar).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said in another hadith, "Keep to the company of the scholars, ask those who are eminent in knowledge, and mix with the wise." (Narrated by Rabbah). And Al-Baihaqi narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Paradise has pillars of ruby on which there are built rooms of chrysolite with doors as twinkling as pearls." They said, "Messenger of

Allah, who are their inhabitants?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "Those who love one another in the way of Allah, and those who sit with one another in the way of Allah and those who accompany one another in the way of Allah."

He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "There are people who are among Allah's favored servants although they are neither prophets nor martyrs." People asked him, "Who are they and what did they do?" He said, "They are people who love one another in the spirit of Allah with no kinship among them or financial deals. By Allah, their faces are light, and they live in light, they won't be scared in situations when other people are scared, and they won't be upset in situations when other people are upset." Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) started to recite the following from the Qur'an: ❮Surely Allah's devotees shall have no fear, neither shall they grieve. Those who believe and always fear Allah❯ (Surat Yunus 10:62). (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

2. Greeting a Friend with *As-Salaamu `Alaikum*

A child should learn that when he meets a friend, he must greet him with, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum.*" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in this context, "By Him in Whose hands is my soul, you shall not enter Paradise as long as you do not believe, and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love among you? Give currency to (the practice of greeting one another by saying) *As-Salaamu `alaikum.*" (Narrated by Muslim). Again a man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "What sort of deeds or traits of Islam are good?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "To feed others, and to greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

How to greet

A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and greeted him saying, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum* (May peace be upon you)." The Prophet (peace and blessings

be upon him) commented saying, "Ten."[4] Then another man came and greeted him saying, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum wa rahmatu-llah* (May the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) commented saying "Twenty." A third man came and greeted him saying "*As-Salaamu `alaikum wa rahmatu-llahi wa barakaatuh* (May the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) commented saying, "Thirty." A fourth man came and greeted him saying, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum wa rahmatu-llahi wa barakaatuhu wa al-maghfiratuh* (May the peace, mercy, blessing and forgiveness of Allah be upon you)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then commented saying, "Forty." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). This hadith shows how people get privileges over one another through good deeds.

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[4]- The numbers indicate the number of *hasanat* (rewards) each one of them got according to the way he greeted. (translator)

The excellence of the one who starts greeting

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one who is the most worthy of Allah among people is the one who starts to greet them." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Who should start to greet?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) explained this issue by saying, "The younger greets the older, the passer-by greets the seated, and the small group greets the larger group." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) further explained, "The rider greets the pedestrian." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

What if two people are separated and meet again?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) instructed us in this situation. "If one of you meets his Muslim brother he must greet him. If a tree, a wall or a rock separates them and then they meet again, he should greet him again." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Greeting children

Anas ibn Malik, the Prophet's servant, related: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) happened to pass by some children who were playing and he greeted them. Anas related another story: When I was young, I was once playing with the other boys. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) came to us and greeted us, then he took me by the hand and gave me a message to deliver. He sat in the shade of a wall till I returned back. (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Greeting the People of the Book

Some Companions asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Messenger of Allah, the People of the Book greet us. How do we respond to their greeting?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "Say: *Wa`laikum* (And upon you too)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "When the Jews greet you

they actually say, *Samu `alaikum*.[5] you should answer them by saying, *Wa `alaikum* (And upon you too)."

There is also the story that Suhail ibn Abi Salih was once on a journey to Syria with some men. Whenever those men passed by Christian monasteries, they greeted their inhabitants. Upon this Suhail said to them, "Abu Hurairah narrated to us that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'Don't start greeting them and when you meet any of them on the roads, force him to go to the narrowest part of it.'" (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

When one leaves a gathering

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about this situation: "When any one of you reaches a gathering he must greet the people, and when he leaves he must greet them again. The first one is not more worthy than the latter." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

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[5]- *As-Salaamu `alaikum* means "Peace be upon you." But the Jews used to say *As-Samu `alaikum*, which means "Death be upon you." (translator)

It is disapproved to say *`alaika as-salaam*

Abu Jara Al-Hujaimi came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said to him, "*`Alaika as-salaamu* (Upon you may peace be)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him, "Don't say *`alaika as-salaam*, as it is the greeting offered to the dead." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

One person can return a greeting on behalf of a group

`Ali ibn Abi Talib narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "It is sufficient for the passing group to have one of them greet on behalf of the rest. And it is sufficient for the seated group to have one of them respond to the greeting on behalf of the rest."

Shaking hands

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When two Muslims meet and they shake hands, praise Allah and ask His forgiveness, Allah will grant them forgiveness." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The same hadith is narrated in another way: "When two Muslims shake hands when they

meet, Allah will grant them His forgiveness before they part." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said when he saw some people of Yemen coming, "Those are the people of Yemen coming to you. They are the first people whom we have ever seen shaking hands." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Hugging

There is a situation that Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari related: While he was in Syria, a man asked him, "I want to ask you about something that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) might have told you except that it is a secret." Abu Dharr answered, "No, it is not a secret." The man asked, "Did the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) shake hands with you when he met you?" Abu Dharr answered, "Every time he met me, he shook hands with me. But one day he sent for me to go to him but I wasn't at home, and when I came back they told me, so I went to him. He was sitting on his chair and when he saw me, he hugged me, which was much better for me." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Standing up

Following the judgment passed on them by Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, the Jews of the tribe of Banu Quraizah left Madinah after the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions had besieged them. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) saw Sa`d coming on a donkey (which had been hurt in the heel by an arrow shot by Ibn Al-`Arqah during the Battle of the Trench), he (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his companions, "Stand up for your master and the best one among you." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

The man kissing his son

One day, a man called Al-Aqra` ibn Habis saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) kissing his grandson, Al-Hasan ibn `Ali. Al-Aqra` said, "I have ten children, boys and girls, and I have never kissed any one of them." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered him, "If one does not have mercy on others, Allah will not have mercy on him." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Kissing between the eyes

When the immigrants to Abyssinia came back on the day of the Battle of Khaibar, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) received his cousin Ja`far ibn Abi Talib by hugging and kissing him between his eyes. (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Kissing on the cheeks

When Abu Bakr entered his daughter `A'ishah's room, after his *hijrah* to Madinah, he found that she had a fever. He asked her, "How are you, my daughter?" and he kissed her on the cheeks. (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Kissing the hand

`Abdullah ibn `Umar said, "We used to kiss the Prophet's hands."

Kissing on the body

While the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was straightening the lines of the army for the Battle of Badr, he jokingly poked Sawad ibn Ghuzziyah in his waist with a stick. Ibn Ghuzziyah said, "Let me retaliate by poking you in your side the same way you did to me." The Prophet (peace

and blessings be upon him) said, "Retaliate." The man told him, "You have your shirt on and I didn't have my shirt on when you poked me." When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) took off his shirt, the man kissed him on his shoulder and said, "Messenger of Allah, may I be made your ransom. This is what I wanted from the start." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

3. Visiting the Sick

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Free the captive, feed the hungry and visit the sick." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The excellence of visiting the sick while having *wudu'*

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever makes *wudu'* (ablution) then visits his sick Muslim brother, he is promised to be as far from Hell-fire as a walking distance of seventy autumns."[6] (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

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[6]- The autumn stands for a whole year. (translator)

Praying for the patient

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) visited Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas while he was sick on the day of opening Makkah to Islam. He put his hand on Sa`d's forehead and wiped his chest and abdomen and recited this *du`a'* (supplication): "O Allah, cure Sa`d and complete his *hijrah* (emigration) for him." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If anyone visits a sick person who is not yet destined to death and says beside him seven times, 'I ask Allah the Great, the Lord of the Mighty Throne to cure you,' Allah will cure him of that sickness." (Narrated by Abu Dawocd). Again the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Five are the rights of a Muslim over his brother: to return the greeting, to say *yarhamuka Allah* when anybody sneezes, to visit the sick, to follow the bier and to accept an invitation." (Narrated by Muslim).

4. Saying Yarhamuka Allah to the Sneezer

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If one of you sneezes he must say, '*Al-hamdu lillah* (All praise be to Allah)' and his Muslim brother must tell him,

'*Yarhamuka Allah* (May Allah have mercy on you).' If he says this, the one who sneezed should say '*Yahdeekum Allah wa yuslih baalakum* (May Allah guide you and grant you peace of mind.'" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). It is also narrated that two men sneezed before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He said to one of them, "*Yarhamuka Allah* (May Allah have mercy on you)," but he did not say that to the other. When asked why, he said, "That one praised Allah (at the time of sneezing) while the other one did not praise Allah." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

5. Visiting the Muslim Friend

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone visits a sick person or visits a Muslim brother for the sake of Allah,[7] a voice will call him that he and his steps are blessed and that he has got his place in Paradise." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

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[7]- To visit someone for the sake of Allah means to pay him the visit just to please Allah with no benefit expected from the visit. (translator)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "A person visited his friend in another village. Allah sent an angel to wait for him on his way. When the man passed by him, he asked, 'Where do you intend to go?' The man answered, 'I intend to visit a friend in this village.' The angel asked him, 'Have you done any favor for him?'[8] The man said 'No, excepting this, that I love him for the sake of Allah.' Thereupon the angel said to him, 'I am a messenger to you from Allah to inform you that Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake).'" (Narrated by Muslim).

6. Meeting His Need

It is said that the friend indeed is the friend in need, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A Muslim is the brother of a fellow Muslim. He should neither commit oppression upon him nor ruin him. And if anyone meets the needs of a brother, Allah will meet his needs. And if he relieves a Muslim from hardship, Allah will relieve him from hardships to which he would be put on the Day of Resurrection. And if anyone did not expose the follies of a

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[8]- That he is going to receive the payment for this favor. (translator)

Muslim, Allah will conceal his follies on the Day of Resurrection." (Narrated by Muslim).

7. Accepting the Friend's Invitation

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Five are the rights of a Muslim over his brother: to return the greeting, to say *yarhamuka Allah* when anybody sneezes, to visit the sick, to follow the bier, and to accept an invitation." (Narrated by Muslim).

8. Expressing Joy on Happy Occasions

`Abdullah ibn Abbas said, "When one meets his brother Muslim after Jum`ah Prayer he must tell him, 'May Allah accept (the prayer) from you and us.'" (Narrated by Ad-Dailami). In the same way Khalid ibn Mu`adh met Athalah ibn Al-Asqa` on the *`Eid* (feast) and told him, "May Allah accept (the prayer) from you and us." The latter answered him, "May Allah accept from you and us." It is also narrated that when Allah accepted the repentance of Ka`b ibn Malik (one of the three who stayed behind during the expedition of Tabuk), Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah got up and rushed towards him and congratulated him for Allah's acceptance of his repentance. (Narrated by Muslim).

9. Giving Gifts on Occasions

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Exchange presents so you may love one another." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he said (peace and blessings be upon him), "O Muslim women! Exchange gifts, even if the gift is the trotter of a sheep. This increases love and takes away hatred." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

In general, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who was a doctor for both hearts and minds, was an exemplar for people in gentleness in all situations — in traveling and staying, in war and peace. It was narrated that he was in the company of one of his friends and he went to some trees and cut off two branches. One of them was straight, the other was bent. He took the curved one and gave the straight one to the man, who said, "You are more worthy of the good branch, Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered him, "No, if anyone accompanies another, he should be responsible for him during this company, even if it is only an hour."

Rabi`ah ibn Abi `Abdur-Rahman said with the same meaning, "Traveling has its rules and so does staying. The

rules of traveling are to share your own provision with the others, to avoid disputes with the friends, and to increase the mood of fun except in the things that displease Allah. The rules of staying are to be frequent in going to mosques and in reading Qur'an, beside increasing the number of your brother Muslims."

A child should beware of bad company because one always follows his friend.

A Child Must Enjoin Right and Forbid Wrong

The word "*ma`roof*" (right or good) is mentioned in the Qur'an thirty-eight times; whereas the word "*munkar*" (wrong or evil) is mentioned sixteen times.

*Ma`roof* refers to any act that is approved by both Shari`ah (Islamic Law) and commonsense. It is a comprehensive word that includes all acts of obedience to Allah, righteousness to people, and all the things that Allah likes His servants to do, including believing and performing good deeds. On the other hand, *munkar* refers to any act that is proved to be evil and ugly by both Shari`ah and commonsense.

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is a great principle in Islam, which Allah kept sending prophets to teach to the people. If it were neglected one day the whole religion would be in danger of perishing, and then ignorance and corruption would spread all over the world.

Allah the All-Wise says in the Qur'an ﴾And from among you let there be a nation inviting to uprightness and enjoining right and forbidding wrong, those they are the successful﴿ (Surat Al `Imran 3:104). In this *ayah* Allah makes

success a special reward for those who enjoin right and forbid wrong.

Allah the True also says ﴾Not all the people of earlier Scripture are the same, there are some of them steadfast reciting the Revelations of Allah all night and prostrate in prayer before Allah; they believe in Allah and the Last Day, they enjoin right and forbid wrong, and vie with one another in good deeds, these are among the righteous﴿ (Surat Al 'Imran 3:113-114). In this *ayah*, Allah shows us that although those people had strong faith in Him and in the Day of Judgment, He did not consider them as righteous till this act of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong was added to them.

In another *ayah*, ﴾And the believing men and the believing women, they are the friends of each other, they enjoin good and forbid evil, and establish prayers﴿ (Surat At-Taubah 9:71), Allah explains to us that only those who enjoin good and forbid evil are to be described as believers and that anyone who does not follow this rule does not deserve this attribution of faith.

Allah also says ❮The unbelievers of the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David, and by Jesus the son of Mary, because of their rebellion and their transgression; they did not forbid each other the wrong things they committed, evil were their doings.❯ (Surat Al-Ma'idah 5:78-79). This *ayah* indicates that the Children of Israel deserved the curse because they neglected this rule of forbidding wrong.

In Surat Al `Imran, Allah stresses the importance of this rule and states that it qualifies people to be the best *ummah* (nation): ❮You are the best nation to have been raised up for humankind. You enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong❯ (Surat Al `Imran 3:110).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hands; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith." (Narrated by Muslim).

Our Islamic society has become overwhelmed by *munkar* since many of the Muslims started to neglect this duty, although Allah promised us to be winners in this life and

the life to come if we observe this duty of enjoining right and forbidding wrong.

Every child can do his share in this responsibility of enjoining right and forbidding wrong in the small society of his own school, not only by his tongue but by setting a good example and having a positive character. He can also do his share at home with his parents, brothers, sisters and relatives. If he is not capable of changing wrong with his hand, at least he can change it by his tongue (that is. forbid the evil by talking to the wrong doers). But he should never be tough or hurt others' feelings by using harsh words. Allah says ❮Call mankind to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and sound advice, and reason with them in a well mannered way.❯ (Surat An-Nahl 16:125). Harshness may lead to hatred and animosity, which are the opposite of what is wanted. Therefore, if he talks to people but he only finds deaf ears turning to him, he can forbid the wrong with his heart by isolating himself from the wrong doers. But if he is incapable of doing this either, then this is a sign that his heart is empty of faith.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A daily prayer is due on every joint of a person." One of the listeners stood up and said, "This is the hardest thing you have ever told us." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is a prayer, carrying a heavy burden for a weak man is a prayer, removing dirt from the road is a prayer, and each of your steps to the prayer is a prayer." (Narrated by Ibn Khuzaimah).

Durrah bint Abi Lahab asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Messenger of Allah, who is the best among people?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered her, "The one who is the most Allah-fearing, the best in observing the ties of the womb[9] and the best in enjoining right and forbidding wrong." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

The same question was asked by Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari: "Messenger of Allah, tell me about an act that if the servant of Allah does it, he enters Paradise." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "To believe in Allah and

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[9]- The womb stands for the bond of kinship. (translator)

the Day of Judgment." Abu Dharr said, "Messenger of Allah, there must be deeds beside the belief." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Let him show satisfaction with the will of Allah regarding whatever He has provided him." Abu Dharr asked, "Messenger of Allah, what if he is too poor to have anything to be satisfied with?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Let him enjoin right and forbid wrong." Abu Dharr said, "Messenger of Allah, he cannot do that because he stammers and is incapable of expressing himself." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Let him do things for someone who is incapable of doing them." Abu Dhar said, "Messenger of Allah, he himself is too clumsy to do anything for anybody." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Let him help a weak person." Abu Dharr said, "He himself is too weak to help anybody." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "What is that friend of yours good for? Let him not harm people." Abu Dharr said, "If he does not do that, will he enter Paradise?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Any Muslim who does any of those things, I'll take him by the hand till he enters Paradise." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Your smile at your Muslim brother's face is *sadaqah* (charity), enjoining right and forbidding wrong is *sadaqah.*" (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). He also said, "The highest degree of jihad is to speak out the word of righteousness in front of a tyrant." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

This is the advice of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Every Muslim male and female has to enjoin right and forbid bad deeds such as drinking alcohol, backbiting, carrying tales, lying, taking *riba* (interest), swearing by something other than Allah, having full trust in someone other than Allah, harming people, supporting oppressors, in addition to neglecting the prayers, *zakah* (alms), fasting or Hajj (pilgrimage).

The only motives for enjoining good and forbidding wrong should be the desire to gain Allah's reward, the fear of His punishment if one does not do it, the anger at seeing Allah's orders disobeyed, the desire to save the wrong doers from Allah's punishment in this life and in the life to come, the love of Allah and the belief that He is worthy of obedience and gratitude.

Those who call people to the way of Allah should be lenient in their words and acts in order to have a stronger effect on people. Abu Sufyan Ath-Thauri said, "The one who enjoins right and forbids wrong should have three characteristics: gentleness with the one he is enjoining and with the one he is forbidding; fairness in the thing he is enjoining and in the thing he is forbidding; knowledge of the thing he is enjoining and of the thing he is forbidding."

May Allah accept us among those who enjoin right and forbid wrong.

Rules Related to Eating

Every human being needs food to build his body, supply it with the energy necessary for its activities and to protect him from certain diseases. But if a person overeats, he will be exposed to serious dangers. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The son of Adam has never filled a container more evil than his stomach. A little meal suffices to build his body. If it is inevitable for him to eat so, let it be one third (of the stomach) for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). The stomach is the container of food. It can be a source of comfort or of trouble. If one eats greedily, he will become heavy and lazy.

There are rules for eating that any educator should teach to every boy and girl.

1. Washing the Hands before and after Eating

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The blessing of eating happens when one makes *wudu'* before and after he eats." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). *Wudu'* in this context refers to personal cleanliness. How can a

person eat and put his hands in his mouth when they are dirty and covered with germs? The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Whoever wants Allah to increase the good in his house, he must make *wudu'* before and after he eats." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

2. Saying Bismillah and Al-Hamdu lillah

A child must say, "*Bismillah* (In the name of Allah)" before eating and "*Al-Hamdu lillah* (All praise be to Allah)" after eating. This rule is firm for eating. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Before anyone of you eats, he must mention the name of Allah (*Bismillah*). If he forgets to do it, let him say, *Bismillahi fi awwalihi wa aakhirih* (In the name of Allah at its beginning and end)." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Allah is pleased with His servant who says *Al-Hamdu lillah* (All praise be to Allah) while taking a morsel of food and while drinking." (Narrated by Muslim). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) himself used to say when he ate, "Praise be to Allah Who provided us with food and drink and guided us to be Muslims." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Allah the Sustainer never expects anything in return for the food and drink He provides except that we say *Bismillah* at the beginning and *Al-Hamdu lillah* at the end of each meal. There is a certain door of Paradise that no one can enter through except those who constantly praise Allah.

Praise should not be just an empty word that we utter with our tongues without understanding its significance, but it means an absolute satisfaction with and gratitude to Allah, not only for the food and drink but also for His countless blessings. ﴿...and if you count Allah's favor, you will never be able to calculate it﴾ (Surat Ibrahim 14:34). This means that if one tries to count Allah's blessings to mankind, such as the blessings of hearing, seeing, etc., one will find them too endless to be counted.

3. Eating with the Right Hand and What Is Near to One

'Umar ibn Abi Salama reported: I was under the care of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), and as my hand used to roam about in the dish he said to me, "Boy, mention the name of Allah, and eat with your right hand and eat from what is near to you." (Narrated by Muslim). The

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Do not eat with your left hand, for Satan eats with his left hand." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) always preferred to use his right hand while making his *wudu'* (ablution); he started washing his right side, and when he put his clothes on he started with the right side. He always started with the right side in all the rest of his affairs.

There are a few left-handed children who are incapable of using their right hands in eating and writing, and it is the responsibility of their parents to train them. If your child is one of them, let him try to train the parts of his body, especially his right hand, to function in the normal way. He also has to observe the rule of eating from the food near to him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The blessing of Allah descends in the middle of a plate, so eat from the edges." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). In this hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) wants to attract people to this good habit by using the abstract idea of the blessing, which is only attained by the hearts, in order to express a concrete situation.

4. A Child Should Not Start Eating in front of Older People

Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman reported: When we attended the dinner along with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), we did not lay our hands on the food until Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) had laid his hand and commenced eating. (Narrated by Muslim).

5. Praying for the Host

A child should know that it is desirable to make *du'a'* (supplication) for his host after he finishes eating. If anybody invites a child for food, it is desirable to pray for him after he finishes eating. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) visited Sa'd ibn 'Ubada, who offered him bread and oil. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ate and then said, "May those who are fasting break their fast in your house, and may the pious eat from your food, and may the angels offer you their blessing." (Narrated by Ahmad).

6. Drinking in Three Gulps

A child should learn not to drink in one gulp but in three. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

"Do not swallow the water in one gulp like cattle but drink in two or three gulps and mention the name of Allah before you drink and praise Him after you finish." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

There is a useful story that illustrates this rule: There was a horseman who was wandering in the desert on a certain mission. It was so hot that his clothes got wet, and he and his horse were thirsty and sweating all over. He saw a distant tent, so he hurried to it to ask for water to quench his thirst. A little girl received him at the tent and brought him a cup of water with some straw on the surface. The horseman took the cup anxiously and started to drink slowly in order to remove the straw with his fingers so he would not swallow them. On finishing, the girl asked him, "Are you satisfied?" The horseman said, "*Al-Hamdu lillah*, but the straw on the surface prevented me from pouring the water down my throat." The girl smiled and said, "I put the straw in your water on purpose when I saw your thirst so you wouldn't swallow the water in one gulp and get hurt." The man admired her intelligence, thanked her and left.

7. Do Not Drink from the Vessel's Mouth

It is disapproved to drink from the mouth of the vessel. Abu Hurairah reported: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade turning the water skins upside down and drinking from their mouths. (Narrated by Muslim). It is taken for granted that drinking from the mouth of a vessel is poor manners and is dangerous to the public health.

8. Do Not Breathe into a Vessel

It is offensive to breathe into a vessel. Ibn `Abbas reported: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade breathing or blowing air into a vessel. (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). It is also clear to everybody that this habit is dangerous to health and disgusting to others.

9. Eating and Drinking while Sitting

It is desirable to eat and drink while one is seated. Anas reported: Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade a person to drink while standing. We said to him, "What about eating?" Thereupon Anas said, "That is even worse." (Narrated by Muslim). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "None of you should drink

while standing; and if anyone forgot, he should vomit." (Narrated by Muslim).

10. A Child Should Not Fill His Stomach

A child should be aware not to fill his stomach with food and drink. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The son of Adam has never filled a container more evil than his stomach. A little meal suffices to build his body. If it is inevitable for him to eat, then let it be one third (of the stomach) for his food, one third for his drink and one third for his breath." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made it desirable for people to be satisfied with what they have. He also encouraged them to eat from the money of their own *halal* (lawful) work. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). said, "The best profit is the one that man gains from his own work, and from any trade that is accepted by Allah." (Narrated by Ahmad). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Allah likes to see His servant tired in seeking the *halal* profit." (Narrated by Ad-Dailami). He also said, "Seeking the *halal* profit is a religious

duty that comes after the other duties." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The one who goes out (to work) to sustain his little children is in the cause of Allah,[10] the one who goes out to sustain his aged parents is in the cause of Allah, the one who goes out to sustain himself so that he doesn't humiliate himself before others is in the cause of Allah, but the one who goes out for boasting and showing off is in the cause of Satan." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

This explains the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that says, "Whoever sleeps at night tired from seeking the *halal* profit sleeps with Allah's forgiveness on him." (Narrated by Ibn `Abbas). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Every time Jibril came to

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[10]- This expression "in the cause of Allah" always occurs in relation to jihad (fighting in the cause of Allah), thus the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is making a similitude between man's going out for work and the noblest principle of Islam, that of jihad. (translator)

me, he commanded me to say these two prayers: 'O Allah, grant me good provision and direct me to the good work.'" (Narrated by Al-Hakim). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The noblest deed is to gain money from one's own work." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi). It is known that Prophet Dawood (David —peace be upon him) used to eat from the earnings of his manual work. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Seeking the *halal* profit is like combating heroes in the cause of Allah. Whoever sleeps at night tired from seeking his *halal* profit sleeps with Allah's satisfaction on him." (Narrated by Sa'id ibn Mansoor).

The following is another hadith with the same meaning: "Whatever a man gains in a *halal* manner from the work of his own hands, and whatever he spends on himself, his wife, his children and his servant is considered a *sadaqah* (charity)." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). The following hadith demonstrates that patience in seeking the *halal* profit is rewarded by Paradise. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone keeps patient in seeking provision in hard circumstances, Allah will let him dwell in whatever place in Paradise he likes." (Narrated by Abush-Shaikh).

If a child holds fast to the Prophet's advice to him, he will keep a healthy mind, body and soul, and he will be a winner both in this life and the life to come.

A Child Should Be Careful Not to Get Angry

Anger is a flame of fire taken from the Hell-fire that Allah prepared for the wrong doers. This fire of anger is temporarily calm in man's heart waiting for Satan to provoke it in a moment of pride, as Satan himself is created from fire.

Anger is the source of troubles. It is narrated that two men abused one another in front of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). One of them grew so angry that the Prophet's Companions thought his nose would be torn apart from the intensity of his anger. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Anger is like a firebrand. Haven't you seen the redness of his eyes and the swelling of his jugular veins? If this happens to one of you, let him lie down on the ground." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Anger pushes the blood in one's head so that the eyes become red and the veins of the neck swell, and this is what science calls hypertension, which is not healthy for the human body.

Every human being is exposed to problems and shocks every now and then in his life, but the intensity of angry reactions differs from one person to another. Our little sons

and daughters are in the beginning of their lives either at school or in their families or in the different fields of sports. Definitely they will face angry situations. How are they going to react towards them? Let them learn from this advice said by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to Mu'awiyah ibn 'Abdul- Hamid: "O Mu'awiyah, beware of anger, it spoils faith in the same way that the bitter syrup of the aloe plant, if mixed with honey, spoils it." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

Among the things that anger may lead to are hatred and envy, the two tempers that have destroyed a lot of people before. It is narrated that a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and told him, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to a good deed that I can do, but don't give me too much so that I can grasp what you say." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't become angry." The man repeated, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to a good deed that I can do but don't give me too much." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) repeated, "Don't become angry." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Anger incites one to seek revenge. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about this, "Anger is a

firebrand that Allah puts in one's heart. Don't you see that if one gets angry his eyes go red, his face glowers, and his jugular veins swell?" (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

Originally, Allah made this temper of anger to be man's weapon of defense against what may harm him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once asked his Companions, "Do you know who the strong man is?" They answered him, "He is the one who wrestles well." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to them, "The true, true, true, true, true strong man is the one who, if he gets so angry that his face turns red and his hair stands, he is able to fight his anger and overcome it." (Narrated by Ahmad). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The strong man is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong man is the one who controls himself while angry." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Another example of the disapproval of anger is this story about Abu Bakr. A man quarreled with Abu Bakr and hurt him with his words, but Abu Bakr was silent. The man hurt him a second time, but Abu Bakr was silent again, but the third time the man hurt him, Abu Bakr started to retaliate.

Thereupon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stood up and left. Abu Bakr ran after the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, are you angry with me?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "There was an angel who descended from heaven to defend you and deny the man's words, but when you retaliated, the angel left and Satan came and sat instead, and I cannot sit where Satan is sitting." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

A man also came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to one act that if I do it, I will enter Paradise." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him, "Don't become angry because anger is the source of corruption." (Narrated by Abud-Dunya).

How to Avoid Getting Angry

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) advised us in times of anger to adopt the reactions explained in the following hadiths — doesn't the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in these advisory hadiths sounds like a psychiatrist? No wonder that Allah describes him like this in

the Qur'an: ﴾Nor does he speak out of caprice. It is nothing but a Revelation revealed (*Qur'an*). He (Muhammad) was taught by one mighty in power *(the angel Jibril)*﴿ (Surat An-Najm 53:3-5).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone of you becomes angry, let him keep silent." (Narrated by Ahmad). Silence takes anger away. And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If a person becomes angry and he says, 'I seek refuge with Allah,' his anger will calm down." (Narrated by Ibn `Adai). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Anger is from Satan, and Satan was created from fire. Water puts off fire. Therefore, if anyone of you gets angry, let him make *wudu'* (ablution)." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone of you gets angry while he is standing, he must sit down; if his anger does not calm down, let him lie down." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Two men started swearing at one another in front of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) so that the face of one of them turned red and his neck veins swelled. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "I know of a

word, if he were to utter that, he would get out of the fit of anger, and the word is, 'I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed.'" (Narrated by Muslim). Thus the useful methods of avoiding anger are: sitting or lying down if we are standing; making *wudu'*, as the water of *wudu'* puts off anger the same way water puts off fire; saying, "I seek refuge with Allah from Satan"; and trying to keep silent.

A child may ask about the reward he gets for suppressing his anger. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There is no impulse better rewarded by Allah than that of an anger that a servant of Allah manages to suppress for the sake of pleasing Him." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If anyone manages to suppress anger that he could burst, Allah will invite him on the Day of Judgment in front of all creation and make him choose whomever he desires from the houris." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). He also said, "Whoever manages to avoid anger, Allah will make him avoid the torture on the Day of Judgment, and whoever keeps his tongue (from hurting others) Allah will conceal his follies on the Day of Judgment." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). This is

the prize of the one who can resist his anger: Allah will spare him the torture of the Day of Judgment.

I want every Muslim child to understand these examples if he or she wants to attain a higher standard of morality and to overcome the snare of the Devil, because when a person gets angry, he does not care about any misdeeds or foolishness he does. This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the best doctor for our hearts, was always encouraging us to control ourselves when angry.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was always an exemplar for his Companions and *ummah* (nation) in patience and gentleness to others. The Prophet's wife `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said about him that, "Whenever he had to choose between two things, he adopted the easier one, provided that it was no sin. But if it was any sin, he was the one who was the farthest from it of the people. And the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never took revenge from anyone because of his personal grievance, unless what Allah the Exalted and Glorious had made inviolable had been violated." (Narrated by Muslim).

The only reason for one to get angry is for the sake of Allah[11]. The following story may explain this meaning.

One day while the Children of Israel were standing in silence to worship a certain tree, a man stood nearby thinking, Why are they worshiping a tree that cannot benefit or harm them? Why don't they worship Allah, Who gave them food and drink and Who cures them when they are ill? He had talked to them many times, but they had only turned a deaf ear to what he said. The man was thinking of fighting them, but he realized that he could not fight them, as he was only one and they were hundreds. Then an idea came to his mind: Why not cut the tree down? He smiled at the idea and decided not to cut it in front of them but rather to do it at night when it was too dark for anybody to see him. He thought of their situation when they would come in the morning to find their god fallen apart. This might make them return to their senses and realize the wrong way they were leading.

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[11]- In case the limits that Allah ordered not to be transgressed are transgressed. (translator)

At night, the pious man took an axe, intending to cut down the tree. On his way, Iblis (the devil) met him in the form of a human being and asked him, "Where are you going?"

The man said firmly, "I'm going to cut this tree down."

Iblis said, "Why? Did it harm you?"

"Yes, the Children of Israel worship it instead of Allah."

"Why should you care about this?"

"How?" said the man, "I have to cut it down."

"No, you won't cut it down."

The man, holding fast to the axe, said, "It has to be cut down!"

Iblis tried to stop the man but he could not. They wrestled, but the man managed to overcome Iblis. When Iblis saw that the man's strong faith and his anger only for the sake of Allah enabled him to win, he thought of stopping him by a trick.

Iblis said to him, "You are such a poor man and you are in need of money, go back to your hermitage and leave this tree to someone else."

"They don't listen to what I say to them and they don't take my proofs seriously."

"If Allah had willed, He could have cut it down Himself."

The man was silent, which encouraged Iblis to go on speaking. "You will have two dinars from me every day in return for not cutting down the tree."

The man accepted the deal and went home. On the first and second nights he found the dinars under his pillow, but on the third he did not. He was very angry and decided to cut the tree down to punish the man for not respecting his word. The pious man took his axe and went to cut down the tree. Iblis met him on the way, as he had expected him to do that.

"Where are you going?" asked Iblis.

"To cut down the tree."

"No, you won't."

"Yes, I will."

The two men wrestled, but Iblis overcame the man, who was astonished to be defeated three days after defeating him.

The man said, "We'll meet tomorrow."

Iblis replied, "I'll be waiting for you."

The next day the pious man went to cut down the tree with his axe, but he met Iblis on the way.

"Where are you going?"

"To cut this tree down."

"No, you won't," said Iblis. They wrestled again, and again the man was overcome.

The man said, "How come I defeated you the first time, then you defeated me afterwards?"

Iblis replied, "Because the first time your anger was for the sake of Allah, but then your anger was for the sake of the two dinars."

Anger should only be for the sake of Allah. Satan provokes anger in man's heart, and if one wants to put out this fire of anger, let him make *wudu'* and say, "I seek refuge

with Allah from Satan the accursed." Everybody should patient in order to avoid erring. The patient person is only known for his patience in times of anger.

A Child Must Have Good Behavior

A person's faith is not complete until he has good behavior. Allah the All-Mighty and the All-Wise praises His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) for this characteristic. He says ﴿And surely you are of a great morality﴾ (Surat Al-Qalam 68:4). There is nothing heavier than good behavior in the Balance that weighs our deeds on Judgment Day. `A'ishah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one who has the most perfect faith is the one who has the best behavior and the one who is the most decent to his family." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Another proof for this is that a man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "What is righteousness and what is wrongdoing?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "Righteousness is good behavior and wrongdoing is that which wavers in your soul and you dislike people finding out about it." (Narrated by Muslim). `A'ishah also said: I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say, "The believer can attain with his good behavior a rank that is not attained by the one who fasts and prays at night." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Another example is when some of the Jews came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and greeted him saying, "*As-Samu `alaikum* (Death be upon you)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "And upon you, too." `A'ishah answered them, "Let death and a curse be upon you, too." Thereupon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "`A'ishah, don't speak bad words." She said, "Didn't you hear what they said?" He answered her, "Didn't I respond to their greeting and say, 'And upon you, too?' O `A'ishah, Allah doesn't like bad words and those who speak them." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to say, "O Allah, grant me beautiful behavior in the way You have granted me a beautiful face." (Narrated by Ahmad). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Allah would never put in Hell-fire the one whom He created with both good shape and good behavior." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made good behavior desirable by telling us, "The one who will be the dearest and the nearest in place to me on the Day of

Judgment is the one who has the best behavior." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

The Meaning of Good Behavior

`Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "Good behavior is made of three characteristics: refraining from what is *haram* (unlawful), seeking what is *halal* (lawful), and being generous to one's own children." Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, "Good behavior is generosity, sacrifice and endurance (of hardships)." Imam Ahmad defined good behavior as, "Good behavior is not to be angry and not to envy." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once asked his Companions, "Shall I tell you who the best of you are?" They said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." He said, "The most long-living and the most well behaved." (Narrated by Al-Bazzar).

When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) wanted to send Mu`adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, Mu`adh asked, "Advise me, Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Worship Allah and don't associate anything with Him in worshiping." Mu`adh said, "Messenger of Allah, give me more." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If you do something bad, follow

it with something good." Mu`adh said, "Messenger of Allah, give me more." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Stand firm in the straight path and improve your behavior." This was the final advice from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to a pious Companion who was most knowledgeable in what is *halal* and what is not. Mu`adh expressed this when he said, "The last thing the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) advised me while my foot was in the saddle was, 'Mu`adh, improve your behavior.'" (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

In the same way the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) met Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari and said to him, "O Abu Dharr, do you want me to tell you about two characteristics that are light on the back (easy to follow) but heavier in the Balance than any other thing?" He said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "You have to keep to good behavior and to a long time of silence. By the One in Whose hands is my soul, people cannot do any better." (Narrated by Ibn Abud-Dunya).

A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is the best

prayer?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The long night prayer." The man asked, "What is the best charity?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When the poor makes his best effort." The man asked, "Who among the believers has the most perfect faith?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one who has the best behavior." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

This last hadith explains that good behavior and faith are one thing, whereas bad behavior and hypocrisy are one thing. If every one of us tries to overcome his own weaknesses till he refrains from sinning, this will lead him to good behavior.

What Are the Signs of Good Behavior?

Allah the Exalted describes the behavior of the believers by saying ❮Prosperous indeed are the believers — who are humble in their prayers, and from vain talk turn away, and who are active in almsgiving, and guard their chastity — except from their wives and what their right hands possess, for that they are not to blame; and whoever goes beyond that, those are the transgressors. And those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants, and who strictly guard their

prayers — those shall be the heirs❳ (Surat Al-Mu'minoon 23:1-10). And He says in another *ayah* ❲They ask you (Muhammad) about the spoils of war. Say, "Spoils are at the disposal of Allah and His Messenger, so fear Allah and be righteous to each other, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers." Most surely the believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe when Allah's Name is mentioned and when His Revelations are recited to them their faith increases, and they put their trust in their Lord.❳ (Surat Al-Anfal 8:1-2). And He says ❲And the true servants of Allah the Most Gracious, are those who walk modestly on the earth, and who when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace"; and those who spend their nights prostrate to their Lord and standing; and those who say: "Our Lord, avert from us the chastisement of Hell; surely its chastisement is a grievous torment; evil indeed is its dwelling place and as an abode". Those who when they spend, are not extravagant nor niggardly, but find a way between; and they do not invoke with Allah any other god, nor kill any soul Allah has forbidden, except by right, not commit adultery; and whoever does this shall meet the price of sin❳ (Surat Al-Furqan 25:63-68).

If anybody compares himself to the traits listed in these *ayahs* and finds many of them in him, then he possesses signs of good behavior; whereas the absence of all of them is a sign of bad behavior. But if he lacks some of them, then he lacks some of the signs of good behavior, and he has to do his best to complete what is missing.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also described in detail what is required for someone to be a good believer. All the traits are related to good behavior. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The true believer is the one whom people can entrust with their money and souls, and the true *muhajir* (emigrant) is the one who can desert sins and wrong doings." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him). said, "Good behavior makes sins melt away as water makes snow melt away, whereas bad behavior spoils man's good deeds as vinegar spoils the taste of honey." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said as well, "The believer who has the most complete faith among you is the one who has the best behavior." (Narrated by Abu Ya`li).

In his advice to Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Fear Allah wherever you are, and when you commit a sin, follow it with a good deed so that the good deed may wipe this sin off, and treat people with good behavior." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

There is a story that proves that children always inherit good behavior from their parents, as Allah says ❮As descendants one from another❯ (Surat Al `Imran 3:34). The story tells about a man who came from Syria and entered Madinah. He saw a good looking, handsome, well-dressed young man riding on a strong mule. The man asked someone from the city about this young man and was told that he was Al-Hasan ibn `Ali ibn Abi Talib. The man felt a great hatred and envy towards Al-Hasan.

He approached him and asked, "Are you really `Ali's son?"

Al-Hasan answered, "I am his son."

The man asked, "Have you heard the bad words that I said about you and your father before?" And the man started to swear at and say the bad words to Al-Hasan.

Then Al-Hasan said, "I think you are a stranger in this city."

The man said, "Yes."

Then Al-Hasan said to him, "If you need accommodation, I can offer it to you. If you need money, I can give you some. Or if you need any help, I can help you."

The man was amazed by the patience the Prophet's grandson showed to him. He left saying, "Nothing on earth is dearer to me than that young man whom I treated harshly and he responded gently."

Let our children try to be among those who, if they commit a sin, follow it with a good deed and those who treat people with good behavior. We ask Allah to grant us good behavior.

Even Children Must Beware of Small Sins

Muslim children should not underestimate the danger of small sins and should not persist in doing them. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to `A'ishah, "O `A'ishah, beware of the small sins." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). The small sins are those that man thinks are too unimportant for him to be punished for, but when they come together they destroy man. The small sin may develop to be a big sin for many reasons. Among them is persisting in doing it. The small sin is not small any more if one persists in doing it, and the big is not big any more if one asks Allah's forgiveness after committing it.

A big sin that is done once is more likely to be forgiven than a small sin that is done repeatedly. Imagine a big rock with drops of water falling repeatedly on it. Surely they will affect it more than a big flow of water pouring on it at one time. This idea — that the effect of the small continuous thing is greater than the big thing that comes once — is clear even with good deeds. The best deeds are those that are constant, even if they are small. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) warned us against the small sins saying, "Beware

of the small sins. The similitude of small sins is that of a group of people who descended into a valley and each one of them brought one straw till they had enough straws to set a fire and bake their bread. The small sins destroy the one who does them." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Another warning by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is, "Satan has despaired of making idols worshiped in the land of the Arabs, but he has satisfied himself by the small sins that you do. The small sins are considered major on the Day of Judgment. When one is taken for many small sins, he gets destroyed by them." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If the servant of Allah makes a mistake, it scratches a black spot in his heart. If he refrains from doing it and asks Allah's forgiveness, his heart will be polished again. But if he goes back to it, his whole heart will be covered with a black stain, which Allah mentions in the Qur'an by saying ﴾No indeed! But their own deeds have rusted upon their hearts﴿ (Surat Al-Mutaffifin 83:14)." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Whenever a person commits sins, those sins pile up on one another till they cover his heart completely. The Prophet

(peace and blessings be upon him) wanted to illustrate this danger of the small sins in a practical way. On the day Allah granted His Messenger victory in the Battle of Hunain, he (peace and blessings be upon him) sat down with his Companions in a desert place. He told them, "Gather anything that you may find, whether a bone or a tooth or anything." After an hour they gathered things and piled them before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who said, "Can you see this? This is the way sins accumulate in someone. Every one of you should fear Allah and stop committing either small or big sins. They all count on a person."

Allah the Exalted revealed to one of His prophets: "Don't look at the smallness of the present, but look at the greatness of the One Who gave it to you; and don't look at the smallness of the sin, but look at the greatness of the One you sinned against (Allah)." In the same manner, Anas ibn Malik used to say to the people after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "You do bad things that appear in your eyes smaller than a hair, but at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) we used to consider them major sins." (Narrated by Ahmad). This shows that what we

consider as a trivial mistake was considered as a major sin at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions.

The believer regards his sin to be a big mountain that is about to fall on his head, but the hypocrite looks at his sins as he looks at a fly that sits on his nose and he shoos it away. Here appears the importance of knowledge: the common man transgresses the limits that the knowledgeable cannot transgress. The more one knows, the more one estimates well the magnitude of his sin. Sometimes one is so ignorant that he may shamelessly boast about his evil deed, like a merchant who publicly boasts, "Don't you see how I managed to fool the customer and took his money in return for defective goods?" Or a girl may be proud to have hurt her friend saying, "Do you see how I spread all her secrets and scandalized her till she was put to shame?" And there are many other examples of big sins that people think in their ignorance are small.

There is the story of the Companion Abud-Darda'. He entered his house one day with his head lowered and his face covered with grief. His wife asked him what was wrong. He

answered her, "By Allah, I can't recognize anything of Muhammad's commands in the people except that they all pray." If this is the condition at the time of the Companions fourteen centuries ago, what about nowadays?

Bilal ibn Sa'id said, "Don't think of how small your sin is, but think of how great the One you sinned against is."

The pious wife should always encourage her husband in matters relating to this life and the life to come. There is the example of a woman who used to pray one hundred *rak'ahs* every day and night and she was always telling her husband, "Stand up and pray, till when are you going to be that careless?" And when he went to his work she used to say to him, "Swear to me that your profit will always be of a *halal* source." And she used to hold his hand and tell him, "Swear to me that you don't do anything for me that might lead you to enter the Hell-fire. Go and visit your mother and your family, and never sever your relationship with them." Look at today's wives and husbands and how they do not care about either big or small sins but commit them publicly.

A child should not underestimate the small mistakes so that he does not fall into the big ones.

Refraining from Doing *Haram* Things

Children have to understand that there are two methods of manifesting one's faith: they are the "dos" and the "don'ts". Religion itself is based on the two things: observing the duties and avoiding the *haram* (unlawful). Avoiding the *haram* is a clearer evidence of the sincerity of one's faith. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If you refrain from doing the *haram*, you will be the most worshiping among people." Allah the Most Gracious, the Most High says ❮Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you, that you do not associate partners with Him, and that you show kindness to your parents, and do not kill your children for fear of poverty, We will bestow on you and them, and do not approach any abomination, open or hidden, and do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. This is what He has enjoined on you that you may understand. And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the fairest manner, until he attains maturity, and give full measure and weigh with justice." We do not burden any soul with more than it can bear, and when you speak, be just, even if it is about one near of kin. And fulfill

Allah's Covenant. This is what He has enjoined on you, that you may remember.❩ (Surat Al-An`am 6:151-152). This is a command from Allah to His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to invite all humanity to listen to the things that Allah has forbidden, such as *shirk* (associating another god with Allah), disrespecting parents, killing babies and other wrong things.

Ka`b Al-Ahbar (who was a rabbi before he converted to Islam) said, "This *ayah* is the first sentence of the Torah." Ibn `Abbas confirmed the same fact saying, "Those *ayahs* that Allah mentioned in Surat Al-An`am are agreed upon by all revealed religions and were never abrogated in any of them." It was also said that those are the Ten Commandments that were revealed to Prophet Musa (Moses).

Speaking about the following *ayah* ❨O you people! Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow Satan's footsteps, surely he is an abject enemy to you.❩ (Surat Al-Baqarah 2:168), Ibn `Abbas said that it was recited at the Prophet's house, whereupon Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas said, "O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah that He may make all my prayers to Him heard and accepted." The Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him) said to him, "You, Sa`d, eat only from the *halal* (lawful) food and Allah will make all your prayers accepted. By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the servant of Allah throws a bite of bread that comes from a *haram* source into his belly, and that makes his good deeds unaccepted for forty days. Any servant whose flesh (body) has grown from food of a *haram* source, the Hell-fire is more worthy of it." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

Sahl ibn `Abdullah said, "Three things lead to salvation: To eat of the *halal*, to observe the religious obligations, and to follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)." Sa`id ibn Yazid said, "Five characteristics are the sign of full knowledge: to know Allah the Exalted and the Most Gracious, to know what is right, to be sincere to Allah in every work, to eat in the Sunnah way (the way the Prophet — peace and blessings be upon him — used to eat), and to eat of the *halal*. Whoever misses one of those characteristics, his good deeds will not mount up to Allah." And Sahl ibn `Abdullah said, "Money is not lawful to us until it is free of these evils: *riba* (interest), dishonesty. the *haram* (the

unlawful), the ill-gotten, the undesirable, and doubtful sources."

Therefore every Muslim child should not evoke Allah's anger on him by transgressing His limits or violating what He made unlawful. He should build up a strong fortress of piety between himself and all the *haram* things. The reason Allah made the wrong things unlawful is because they are perilous to man, and life will always prove to man that what he has shunned out of piety and fear of Allah is a potential danger that he does not know about. This is clear in the following *ayah*: ﴿...and forbids them from the impure, He relieves them from their burdens, and frees them from the fetters which were upon them.﴾ (Surat Al-A`raf 7:157).

A Muslim is always confident that there can be no good in something Allah has forbidden. Therefore he turns a deaf ear to all the heretical assumptions that may try to cast doubts in the logic behind making things *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful). It is always because of man's love for this life and its ornament that he violates Allah's commands by doing what is *haram*, but man, with his ignorance, thinks that he can run away from the evil side effects of those forbidden things. But

as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If one of you tries to run away from what Allah has written for him, it will find him out as when death finds him out." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

Money is also considered to be *halal* when it does not keep one busy from religion. The Companion Abud-Darda' reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The sun has never risen except that Allah sends on both its sides two angels calling. All the inhabitants of earth can hear them except for the two worlds of man and jinns, and they (the angels) say, 'O you people, come to your Lord. A little but sufficient is better than plenty that keeps you busy from Him.' Nor has the sun ever set except that Allah sends on both its sides two angels calling. All the inhabitants of earth can hear them except for the two worlds of man and jinns. And they say, 'O Allah, give the one who offers charity a compensation (reward), and give the one who holds his hand from giving charity a loss.'" (Narrated by Ahmad).

Ibn 'Abbas also said: In the Prophet's farewell speech, in the last Hajj in Al-Khif Mosque at Mina, he praised Allah and mentioned Him in the way He is worthy of and then said,

"The one whose sole interest is the worldly gain, Allah will break him up and make his poverty in front of his own eyes and he won't take from those worldly gains except for what Allah has written for him." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made it desirable for us to eat food of *halal* sources, so he said, "Allah the All-Mighty is good and accepts only what is good. Allah has commanded the faithful to do what He commanded the Messengers, and the All-Mighty says ﴾O Messengers, eat of the good things and do righteous deeds, surely I am All-Knowing of what you do﴿ (Surat Al-Mu'minoon 23:51) and ﴾O you who believe! Eat from the good things which We have bestowed on you﴿ (Surat Al-Baqarah 2:172)." Then he mentioned: "(Take) the case of a man who, having journeyed far, is disheveled and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the sky saying, 'O Lord! O Lord!' while his food is *haram*, his drink is *haram*, his clothing is *haram*, and he is nourished in a *haram* manner, so how can he be answered." (Narrated by Muslim).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Seeking the *halal* is a duty on every Muslim." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

One day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions, "Feel shy from Allah." They said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, we do feel shy." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "This is not shyness, but real shyness means that the mind keeps what it learns, the abdomen keeps what it eats (to eat and drink what is only *halal*), and that one should always remember death and its decay. Whoever wants the Hereafter must abandon the ornament of this life. This is the way to be shy from Allah." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Another hadith reported by Abu Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman says: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once stood up and invited people to him saying, "Come to me." The people went to him and sat down, then he said to them, "This is the Messenger of Allah the Lord of the Worlds. I learned that no soul can die before it gets what Allah has provided it, even if it was delayed; therefore fear Allah and ask His provision in a gentle way. Don't make this delay a

reason for you to sin, because Allah doesn't give from what He has except to those who are obedient." (Narrated by Al-Bazzar).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Whoever eats *halal* food[12] and acts according to the Sunnah and has people safe from his evils will enter Paradise." They said. "You have many people of your *ummah* (nation) like that." He said, "And there will also be people like that in the centuries to come." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If a person gains *halal* money so that he feeds and clothes himself, it is considered a charity for him. And if a person who doesn't have money to offer for charity says this prayer — 'O Allah, send Your blessing on Muhammad Your Servant and Messenger, and send Your blessing on the men and women believers and on men and women Muslims' — it is considered a charity for him." (Narrated by Abu Ya'li).

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[12]- "*Halal*" here means two things: that the food itself is not of a forbidden kind and that the money to buy it is *halal* (lawful). (translator)

Seeking what is *halal* is a duty on every Muslim man and woman. And the best deed is to gain money from one's own work. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands. The Prophet Dawood (David) used to eat from the earnings of his manual labor." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Allah likes to see His Servant tired in seeking the *halal* profit." (Narrated by Ad-Dailami). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The prophets were commanded not to eat except for the good food and not to do except for the good deed." (Narrated by Al-Hakim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "(There are) four things, (that) if they exist in you, don't ever regret missing any other thing in this world: to be able to keep people's trusts, to speak the truth, to have good behavior, and to have integrity in the way you earn the money for your food." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Among the *haram* things that a Muslim may fall into is that he deserts his Muslim brother more than three days. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in disapproval

of this habit, "Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert one another, and O Allah's worshipers! Be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also forbade Muslims from backbiting. He was once asked by a man, "Messenger of Allah, what is backbiting?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, "Backbiting implies your talking about a brother in a manner that he does not like." It was said to him, "What is your opinion about this if I actually find in my brother that failing that I mentioned?" He said, "If that failing is actually found in him, you in fact backbit him, and if that is not in him, it is a slander." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also cursed the one who cheats other Muslims. He said, "Cursed is he who harms a believer or cheats him." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone harms others, Allah will harm him; and if anyone

makes it difficult for others, Allah will make it difficult for him." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Swearing at others or calling them bad names is considered *haram.* The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Abusing a Muslim (by words) is an outrage and fighting against him is an (act of) disbelief." (Narrated by Muslim). It is *haram* to insult not only the living but also the dead. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't insult the dead, as this hurts the living." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "*Fuhsh* (obscene language) has never been in something but it puts it to shame, whereas shyness has never been in something but it adorns it." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

The problem with the enemies of Islam is that they want to make everything *halal* without any understanding of the wisdom behind those Divine laws. They wish to take man back to the primitive ages when he used to live like an animal with no restrictions. Islam regards this as corruption that will lead to great dangers. If this happens, people will not feel safe any more. The enemies of Islam claim that although the Muslims live in modern ages, they follow rules of *haram* and

halal that are an old style of life. They are unaware that man is man and that his human needs are the same throughout the ages.

Since the dawn of humanity, man has always disapproved wrong doings as being a threat to the safety of society and has always approved the relationship between a man and a woman only within marriage, and has recognized that the family is the natural grouping that offers men and women stability and happiness. Why do those decadent people want to pull down families under the assumption that it is old-fashioned?

In the pre-Islamic period, women used to feel easy about displaying their charm and they did not observe chastity. They sometimes used to live by prostitution. Islam came to preserve their dignity and to raise them up to the level of humanity. Why are those decadents trying to take women back to the same shameful life that they used to lead?

Alcohol has also been proven by modern science to have tremendous effects on man's health. It causes stomach

cancer, HIV/AIDS[13] and other diseases and this is the reason it was outlawed by Allah. So why are those decadents trying to fulfill their fleshly desires at the expense of their own good? According to the same logic, they permit interest, false testimony, hypocrisy, black magic, lying and dishonesty claiming that these are the prerequisites of civilization.

Evil does not exist except in the absence of truth, but when the light of truth prevails, evil will disappear. This is the fact of life.

[13]- Alcohol does not directly spread HIV/AIDS, but its use encourages risky behavior that does spread the disease. (editor)

Removing What Is Harmful from the Path

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest is the removal of what is injurious from the path." (Narrated by Muslim). Imam Al-Hafiz said in his explanation of the number "over seventy", "I went to the books of Sunnah and counted all the acts of faith and I found them less than seventy. I opened the book of Allah and read it carefully and counted all the acts of faith and I found them less than seventy. I added what I found in books of Sunnah to that in Qur'an and I skipped the repeated ones and the result was seventy-nine no more and no less." (Narrated by Muslim and An-Nawawi).

What is injurious is not confined to bones, thorns or rocks, but it also includes things from our age like broken glass, bread, papers that have the name of Allah or parts of the Qur'an on them, those things that people throw carelessly not thinking that they may harm people. Those who volunteer to remove those papers from the path and then burn or bury them in a safe place so that no one steps on them will have a great

reward from Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said on the same subject, "Remove the troublesome things from the path." (Narrated by Muslim).

Al-Mustaneer ibn Akhdar said, "O Uncle, I saw you doing something and I imitated you." Ma`qil ibn Yasar answered, "I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say, 'If anyone removes the harmful things from the path of the believers, Allah will ordain for him that he has done a good deed, and whoever's good deed is accepted by Allah will enter Paradise.'" (Narrated by At-Tabarani). Is this true that removing the harm things from the road takes one to Paradise? Yes. Why not, if Allah Himself says ❮And whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.❯ (Surat Az-Zalzalah 99:7-8).

There are two useful hadiths that promise the believers good reward if they do this thing. The first is one in which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "I saw a man who is enjoying himself in Paradise because of the tree that he cut from the path, which was a source of inconvenience to the people." (Narrated by Muslim). And the second is, "While a

person was going along the path he found a thorny branch upon it. He pushed it to one side and Allah approved this action of his and as a mark of appreciation He granted him forgiveness." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once said to his Companions, "Everyone has got three hundred sixty joints in his body. He has to pay a *sadaqah* (charity) on behalf of each joint every day the sun rises." The Companions asked him, "Who can bear such a thing, Prophet of Allah?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "The doors to the good deeds are many. Among them are: exalting Allah (saying *Subhan Allah*), declaring Allah to be One (saying *La illaha illa Allah*), enjoining right and forbidding wrong, removing the harmful thing from the road, helping the deaf to hear, showing the blind the way, helping the one in need, and supporting the weak with your hands. All these things are considered *sadaqah* from you to yourself." (Narrated by Ibn Hibban).

The Companion Mu`adh ibn Jabal was once walking along a road and removed a rock from the road. When he was asked about it, he said, "I heard the Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him) say, 'Whoever removes a rock from the path of the believers, Allah will write for him that he has done a good deed, and whoever's good deed is accepted by Allah will enter Paradise." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Companion Abu Hurairah reported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "*Sadaqah* (charity) is due on every joint of a person, every day the sun rises. Administering justice between two persons is also a *sadaqah*, and assisting a man to mount upon a beast, or helping him load his baggage upon it is a *sadaqah*. And a good word is a *sadaqah*; and every step that you take towards prayer is a *sadaqah* and removing the harmful things from the pathway is a *sadaqah*." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said with the same meaning, "A daily prayer is due on every joint of a person." A man from the Ansar said, "This is the hardest thing you have ever told us." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is a prayer, carrying a heavy burden from a weak man is a prayer, removing the dirt from the road is a prayer and each of your steps to the prayer is a prayer." (Narrated by Ibn Khuzaimah).

`A'ishah also reported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying, "Every one of the children of Adam has been created with three hundred sixty joints. So he who declares Allah to be One, glorifies Allah, seeks forgiveness from Allah, removes a stone, thorn or bone from people's path, and enjoins right and forbids wrong to the number of those three hundred sixty will walk that day having removed himself from Hell." (Narrated by Muslim).

Lastly, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, "Your smile at your brother's face is a *sadaqah,* enjoining right is a *sadaqah*, forbidding wrong is a *sadaqah*, directing a man who is lost in the land to the right way is a *sadaqah*, removing the harmful things — thorns and bones — from the road is a *sadaqah*, and pouring water from your own bucket to that of your brother is a *sadaqah*."

Our pure religion is full of good things. Children should know to do them and they will find the good, and they must ask themselves before Allah asks them on the Day of Judgment.

Helping One Another in Righteousness and Piety

No Muslim ever lives by himself, but he lives among people and offers them all the help they may need. Allah the All-Mighty says ❮Cooperate with all in what is good and pious, and do not cooperate in what is sinful and aggression❯ (Surat Al-Ma'idah 5:2). This is a command from Allah the All-Mighty to the believers to cooperate with one another in matters related to righteousness and piety. We have to encourage one another to do good things and forbid one another from doing what Allah forbade. "Good" and "pious" are two synonyms that Allah places side by side in the *ayah* to make it emphatic. The difference between the two words is that piety means to please Allah by fearing Him, whereas goodness means to please people. Whoever manages to combine both is the truly blessed person.

The scholar has the duty of benefiting others with his knowledge, the rich one has the duty of assisting others with his money, and the brave has the duty of fighting in the cause of Allah. The important thing is that all of them should come together and be hand in hand.

The Muslim society is based on this idea of solidarity among its individuals, especially in times of crises. This idea of the Muslims as one body having the same feelings and aspirations is expressed in the following hadith: "The believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also described the relationship that is supposed to exist among the believers by saying, "The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever." (Narrated by Muslim). Allah the Exalted describes this relationship by saying ❮And the believing men and the believing women, they are the friends of each other❯ (Surat At-Taubah 9:71) and ❮The believers are brothers❯ (Surat Al-Hujurat 49:10). The word "brother" implies, as well, a total partnership in responsibility.

It is unacceptable that Muslim brothers live apart or give up one another. Muslims are like the strong building or like one body. This is the utmost degree of solidarity that any society strives to achieve among its members. Every Muslim

is asked to fulfill the requirements of this brotherhood of Islam, and every Muslim should realize, as well, that such requirements are an obligation on him that he is going to be judged for. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A Muslim is the brother of a fellow-Muslim. He should neither commit oppression upon him nor ruin him. And if anyone meets the needs of a brother, Allah will meet his needs, and if anyone relieves a Muslim from hardship, Allah will relieve him from hardships to which he would be put on the Day of Resurrection. And he who did not expose the follies of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his follies on the Day of Resurrection." (Narrated by Muslim).

A Muslim should find his happiness and peace of mind in assisting others and solving their problems because he knows that when he does this, he is doing it for himself to make it easier on himself on the Day of Judgment.

Concealing the follies of a Muslim is considered a noble human virtue. It can only be attained by those who manage to raise themselves up to the level of mercy. They know that such behavior is a proof of true faith. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "None of you truly believes until

he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself." (Narrated by Muslim).

To make it desirable for people to assist one another in times of need, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah has made some of His creation to meet the needs of people. People will hurry to them when they need help. Those are the ones who will be safe from Allah's torture." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said with the same meaning, "Allah has granted some people with bounties. He keeps those bounties for them as long as they meet the needs of others, but whenever they feel bored from meeting the needs of others, Allah will take those bounties away from them and pass them to some other people." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Whenever a person walks in rendering a service for his brother Muslim, Allah will write for him seventy good deeds and will wipe out for him seventy of his bad deeds for each step till he returns home. If this brother's need was fulfilled at the hand of this person, Allah will remove all his sins for him so that he will be like the day his mother gave birth to him,

and if he dies while rendering this service, he will enter Paradise with no account." (Narrated by Ibn Abud-Dunya).

If anyone directs other people to a good deed, it is as if he himself did it; whereas if anyone directs other people to a bad deed, it is as if he himself did it.

Every child should be asked: Have you ever seen, on way to school or home, a blind man walking in the street, not knowing what to do or where to go and he is about to be knocked down by a car? Have you thought then of the bounty of eyesight that Allah has favored you with in order to protect you from dangers and from harmful things and to enable you to see the beautiful signs that Allah has made in the universe? Did you then think of taking that blind man by the hand and helping him to cross the road? And if you did that, how did you feel? Did you feel satisfied and happy? Did you have an overwhelming desire to render Allah His due praise?

What Are the Rights of a Muslim over His Brother Muslim?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Six are the rights of a Muslim over his brother: greeting when you meet him, accepting his invitation, offering him

advice if he asks you for it, saying *yarhamuka Allah* when he sneezes, visiting him if he is sick, and following his bier once he dies." (Narrated by Muslim).

1. To Greet with Salaam

The rights of a Muslim over his brother are many, the first of which is offering and responding to the greeting *As-Salaamu `alaikum*. The word "*salaam*" is the greeting of the dwellers of Paradise, and we are directed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to spread this word of greeting among us. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in this context, "By Him in Whose hands my soul is, you shall not enter Paradise as long as you do not believe, and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love among you? Give currency to (the practice of greeting one another by saying) *As-salaamu `alaikum*." (Narrated by Muslim).

Again, a man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) "What sort of deeds or traits of Islam are good?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "To feed

others and to greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

`Abdullah ibn Salam reported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying, "O people, spread greetings among you, offer food to others, join the tie of relationship and pray at night while other people are asleep. If you do these things you will enter Paradise peacefully." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Anas ibn Malik said, "Whenever the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) spoke a sentence or said a thing, he used to repeat it thrice so that the people could understand it properly from him and whenever he asked permission to enter, he knocked the door thrice with greeting." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "When Allah the Most High first created Adam, He said to him, 'Go to those (a number of sitting angels) and listen to the way they are going to greet you. These will always be the words of salutation for you and for your descendants after you.' Adam said to them, 'May peace be upon you.' And they

answered him, 'May peace and mercy be upon you.' (They added the word 'mercy' to Adam's phrase)." (Agreed upon).

Allah the All-Mighty mentioned the importance of greetings in many places in the Qur'an. For example: ❮Have the tidings of Abraham's honoured guests reached you? When they entered before him, they said: "Peace!" He said: "Peace..."❯ (Surat Adh-Dhariyat 51:24) and ❮And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with one better than it, or return it...❯ (Surat An-Nisa' 4:86).

Abu Jara Al-Hujaimi came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said to him, "*`Alaika as-salaam* (Upon you may peace be)." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him, "Don't say *`alaika as-salaam*, as it is the greeting offered to the dead." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

The Muslims now have a weak personality after they started to take their habits from the West. The greetings, for example, have changed from that of Islam to those of English and French people. Now people say, "Good morning," and, "*Bon jour,*" and sometimes Arabic greetings that resemble those of the pre-Islamic (*Jahili*) times.

Allah has favored us with this special greeting of the dwellers of Paradise: *As-Salaamu `alaikum wa rahmatullah.* (May the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you). Keep it in the child's heart and get him used to exchanging it from his early age. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Peace is one of Allah's attributes, so spread it among you." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If two Muslims meet and shake hands just for the sake of Allah, they don't separate but that Allah has forgiven both of them." (Narrated by Ahmad).

When a Muslim responds to his brother's greeting, it is considered a *sadaqah* (charity) for him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about this, "The response of one Muslim to the greetings of his brother is a *sadaqah*." (Narrated by Abush-Shaikh).

The Companion Abu Rashid `Abdur-Rahman came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and greeted him saying, "Good morning, Muhammad." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "This is not the greeting that Muslims exchange among themselves. If you come to a Muslim group of people, say, '*As-Salaamu*

'alaikum wa rahmatullah (May the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you).'" (Narrated by Ad-Dulabi).

Rules of greeting

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Greeting should come before talking." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Greeting should come before asking. If someone starts asking you before he greets you, don't answer him." (Narrated by Ibn An-Najjar). Some other rules of greeting as stated by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) are, "The young should greet the old, the passer-by should greet the seated, and the small group of persons should greet the large group of persons." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The riding person should greet the walking one, and the walking one should greet the sitting one, and the small number of persons should greet the large number of persons. If anyone answers the greeting, it will be a reward for him; but whoever doesn't answer the greeting, there will be no reward for him." (Narrated by Ahmad).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one who starts greeting is blameless of pride." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi) "The one who starts greeting is blameless of estrangement." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi). "Men should start greeting women, whereas women should not start greeting men." (Narrated by Ibn As-Sunni).

Greeting Jews and Non-Muslims

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade that we act like non-Muslims. He said, "He who acts like a non-Muslim is not one of us. Don't act like Jews or Christians. The Jews greet with a gesture of their finger, and the Christians greet with a gesture of the hand." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also forbade that Muslims start greeting the Jews and Christians. He said, "Don't start greeting the Jews and Christians, and when you meet any of them on the road force him to go to the narrowest part of it." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't greet in the manner of the Jews and Christians. They greet with hands and eyebrows." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't greet

in the manner of the Jews and the Christians. They greet with hands, heads and gestures." (Narrated by Ad-Dailami).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions one day, "I'll be riding to the land of the Jews tomorrow. Those who are coming with me, don't greet them before they greet you and when they greet you answer them saying, 'And upon you, too.'" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). When a Jew greets you he actually says, "*As-Samu `alaikum* (Death be upon you)," so answer him saying, "*Wa `alaikum* (And upon you, too)."

In another situation, a Jew passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions and said, "*As-Samu `alaikum*." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "*Wa `alaikum*." Then he turned to his Companions and said, "Do you know what he said?" They answered, "He greeted us." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "No, he said, 'Death be upon you.' If any of the People of the Book greets you, say to him, 'And upon you, too.'" (Narrated by Ibn Hibban).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "The Jews do not envy us except for three things: greetings,

answering greetings and repeating '*Ameen*' and '*Rabbana laka al-hamd* (Our Lord, all praise be to You)' after the imam during the prayers." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi). It was also reported by Jabir ibn `Abdullah that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade that we shake hands with non-Muslims, welcome them, or call them by their *kunya* (epithet). (Narrated by Abu Na`eem).

Cases in which greeting is forbidden

The first case in which greeting is forbidden is during the prayers. A man greeted the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) while he was praying, so he did not respond, and when he finished he said, "Nothing prevented me from responding to your greetings but the fact that I was praying." (Narrated by Muslim).

The second case is while one is in the toilet. A man passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) while he was urinating and greeted him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not answer him, and when he finished he said, "I hate to mention the name of Allah except when I am pure." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). Another person passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)

while he was urinating and said, "May the peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not answer and then said, "If you see me in such a position, don't greet me because if you do, I won't answer you." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). In another situation the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had to answer someone who greeted him while urinating, and when he finished he said to him, "What forced me to respond to your greeting is lest you should go back to your people and complain saying, 'I greeted the Prophet and he didn't answer me back.' If you ever see me in such a situation, don't greet me, and if you do, I will not respond to your greeting." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

Shaking hands and hugging

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made shaking hands desirable by saying, "The Muslim's kiss is to shake hands." (Narrated by Ibn Shahin). He also made hugging desirable by saying, "The first one to hug was Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him). This was before people got used to prostrating to one another. But when Islam came, it came with shaking hands." (Narrated by Abush-

Shaikh). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If any Muslim shakes hands with his brother Muslim while the heart of each of them is empty of rancor, their hands don't separate till Allah has granted them forgiveness for their past sins. And whoever looks at his brother in affection while his heart is empty of rancor, his glance will not return to him till Allah has granted them forgiveness for their past sins." (Narrated by Ibn An-Najjar). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Shake hands because shaking hands removes animosity, and exchange presents because presents remove rancor from the hearts." (Narrated by Ibn `Asakir).

2. To Visit the Sick

Visiting a patient is one of the factors that lead to stronger love and solidarity among the members of society.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Verily, Allah the Exalted and Glorious will say on the Day of Resurrection, 'O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me.' He will say, 'My Lord, how could I visit You whereas You are the Lord of the Worlds?' Thereupon He will say, 'Didn't you

know that such-and-such servant of Mine was sick, but you did not visit him, and were you not aware that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked for food from you but you did not feed Me.' He will say, 'My Lord, how could I feed You whereas You are the Lord of the Worlds?' He will say, 'Didn't you know that such-and-such servant of Mine asked for food from you, but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him, you would have found him by My side? O son of Adam, I asked for drink from you, but you did not provide Me.' He will say, 'My Lord, how could I provide You whereas You are the Lord of the Worlds?' Thereupon He will say, 'Such-and-such servant of Mine asked you for a drink, but you did not provide him, and had you provided him a drink you would have found him by My side.'" (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Free the captive, feed the hungry and visit the sick." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He who visits the sick is supposed to remain in the fruit garden of Paradise." It was said, "Messenger of

Allah, what is the fruit garden of Paradise?" He said, "It is a place abounding in fruits." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There is no Muslim who visits a patient by noon time but seventy thousand angels will keep sending their blessings on him till the evening. And if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels will keep sending their blessings on him till the morning and he will be granted the harvest of the dates of Paradise." (Narrated by `Ali ibn Abi Talib).

3. To Follow Biers (Funerals)

Should we prevent our children from following biers and from watching the burial of the dead under the assumption that this may destroy their innocence? No, because it is a useful lesson for them. Why should children not learn about death and resurrection? Why should they not see that man's life ends in an instant, leaving him nothing but the good things that he did? Why should they not realize the fact that the dead is cut off from everything he had in this life: his money, children, wife and everything he used to have?

To encourage people to attend funerals, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If a company of

Muslims numbering one hundred pray over a dead person, all of them interceding for him, their intercession for him will be accepted." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If any Muslim dies and forty men who associate nothing with Allah offer prayer over him, Allah will accept them as intercessors for him." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He who offered prayer for the dead, for him is the reward of one *qirat*. And he who attended his burial, he will have two *qirats* as his reward. A *qirat* is equivalent to Uhud[14]." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade that graves be plastered or used as sitting places or have any construction over them.

4. To Accept Invitations

A child should be taught to accept the invitation of his Muslim brother if the intention of the visit is to improve his piety and increase love and cooperation between him and his

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[14]- Uhud is the name of a mountain in Madinah. This shows the magnitude of the reward. (translator)

brothers. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone of you is invited, he must go (accept the invitation)." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) always made it desirable for his Companions to accept invitations for feasts. A person from the Ansar, Abu Shu`aib, had a slave who was a butcher. He saw Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and found signs of hunger on his face. He said to the servant, "Prepare for us food sufficient for five persons, for I intend to invite Allah's Messenger, who would be the fifth of the five." He prepared the food, and then came the one who was the fifth of them to the feast. A man followed him, and when Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) reached the door he said, "This man has followed us. If you like, you may permit him to join the meal, and if you like, he can go back." Thereupon the person said, "Messenger of Allah, I permit him." (Narrated by Muslim).

5. To Say "Yarhamuka Allah" to the One Who Sneezes

It happens sometimes that a person catches cold. Allah created man with this mechanism of sneezing to get rid of nasal congestion. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Say *Yarhamuka Allah* to a person if he sneezes up to three times. If he sneezes any more, then it is only a common cold." (Narrated by Ibn As-Sunni). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If any of you sneezes, say to him *Yarhamuka Allah* up to three times, but don't say it to him on the fourth, as it is a common cold." (Narrated by Ad-Dailami).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once said to `Uthman ibn `Affan, "`Uthman, shall I give you this glad news? Jibril came to inform me that if a believer sneezes three successive times, this is a sign of fixed faith in his heart." (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sneezed, he used to put his hand or clothes on his mouth to soften his noise, and he used to hate strong sneezing in the mosque.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) taught us that the one who sneezes must praise Allah by saying *Al-Hamdu lillah* and turn his face aside. He said, "If one of you sneezes he must say *Al-Hamdu lillah*, and his Muslim brother must tell him *Yarhamuka Allah* (May Allah have mercy on you). If he says this, the one who sneezed should say *Yahdeekum Allah wa yuslih baalakum* (May Allah guide you and grant you peace of mind." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If anyone of you sneezes, he should say *Al-Hamdu lillah `ala kulli haal* (All praise be to Allah for everything)." (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

One day the Companions were praying behind the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). One of them, whose name was Rifa`ah, sneezed and said, "Many blessed praises are due to Allah in the way that satisfies and pleases Him." When the prayer was over, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked who the speaker was, but Rifa`ah was silent. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked another time, so Rifa`ah said, "It was I, Messenger of Allah. I sneezed and said, 'Many blessed praises are due to

Allah in the way that satisfies and pleases Him.'" Thereupon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "By Him in Whose hands my soul is, over thirty angels hurried to this saying of yours and raced who would mount up with it before the other." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Again, two men sneezed before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He said to one of them, "May Allah bestow His mercy on you," but he did not say that to the other. On being asked why, he said, "That one praised Allah (at the time of sneezing) while the other one did not praise Allah." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

6. To Give Advice

Allah the Exalted says ﴾The believers are brothers﴿ (Surat Al- Hujurat 49:10) and ﴾...and I advise you...﴿ (Surat Al-A`raf 7:62). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in support of this Divine instruction, "*Ad-Din* is the name of sincerity." Upon this, some asked him, "For whom?" He replied, "For Allah, His Book, His Messenger, and for the leaders and the general Muslims." (Narrated by Muslim).

Jarir narrated: I pledged allegiance to Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) on the

observance of prayers, payment of *zakah*, and sincerity and well-wishing for every Muslim. (Narrated by Muslim).

Consider those six rights of each Muslim over his brother. Are they not the peak of social manners that surpass the Western tradition, which they term protocol, civilization, development, etc? May Allah direct us to the right path.

Contemplate this *ayah*: ❨Indeed this is My Righteous Way, therefore follow it, and do not follow diverse paths, lest they lead you away from His path.❩ (Surat Al-An`am 6:153). In this *ayah,* Allah warns us against following any way other than His. The Companion `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood confirmed the same idea when a man asked him, "What is the straight path?" He answered him, "Muhammad has left us at its end, while its beginning is in Paradise. On both its right and left sides there are men calling the people to go with them. Whoever listens to them and takes their way, it will lead him to Hell-fire; whereas the one who keeps on the path will end up in Paradise."

Children Should Keep Trusts

Honesty with trusts is a genuine virtue in Islam. It springs from the Islamic faith and reflects its nobility and truthfulness. Ibn `Abbas explained the meaning of "trust" saying, "Among the meanings of 'trust' are: the deeds that Allah entrusted His servants to do and this meaning is equivalent to the term 'religious duties'. It also means the things that people entrust one another to keep for themselves."

In the following *ayah*, Allah commands us to keep trusts: ﴾Allah commands you to render back trusts to whom they belong﴿ (Surat An-Nisa' 4:58). If we constantly keep to this virtue of observing trusts, then we will be among those whom Allah describes as ﴾...those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants, and those who strictly guard their prayers, those shall be the heirs who shall inherit Paradise, they shall dwell therein forever.﴿ (Surat Al-Mu'minoon 23:8-11).

Honesty in keeping trusts is a sign of faith, whereas dishonesty is a sign of unbelief. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He who has no honesty

regarding trusts has no faith. And he who has no covenant has no belief." (Narrated by Ahmad).

The things that Allah entrusts His servants to do are many. There is a trust due on every part of the body. The tongue is entrusted not to lie, backbite, carry tales or invent something that is not in the religion (*bid`ah*) because every *bid`ah* is a deviation and every deviation is in Hell-fire. The eye is entrusted not to look at anything *haram*, the ear is entrusted not to listen to anything *haram*, and the same applies to the other parts of the body.

The trusts that some people deposit with others should be given back to them. Merchants are entrusted not to cheat while weighing things, rulers are entrusted to be fair to their subjects, and scholars are entrusted to teach the public good behavior and teach them what is right and what is wrong.

Trust imposes on every Muslim a certain responsible behavior in all the small and big events of his life. This explains the meaning of the following hadith: "All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care. The imam (ruler) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them. And a man is the guardian of his

family and is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's house and is responsible for it. A servant is the guardian of his master's belongings and is responsible for them." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Trusts and responsibilities vary in their weight. The responsibility of ruling people, for example, is a big trust that no Muslim should take on unless he is up to it. The Companion Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari narrated: I said to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Messenger of Allah, will you not appoint me to a public office?" He struck my shoulder with his hand and said, "Abu Dharr, you are weak and authority is a trust, and on the Day of Judgment it is a cause of humiliation and repentance except for one who fulfils its obligations and properly discharges the duties attended thereon." (Narrated by Muslim).

Realizing that Allah is watching over us in both secret and public is a trust. Obeying the commands of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding the dos and the don'ts is a trust. And protecting and defending this whole religion is a trust that if we do not keep, then we are unfaithful to Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

The Companion `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "On the Day of Judgment, the one who was dishonest in keeping a trust will be brought and it will be said to him, 'This is your trust.' Then he will answer, 'How, my Lord, and life has passed away?' Then the trust will appear to him in the same shape it used to be the day he received it, and it will be in the bottom of the Hell- fire. It will be said to him, 'Go down and get it out.' Then he will go down and carry it on his shoulder and it will be heavier on him than all the mountains of the world. Whenever he thinks he's done it, it will fall again and he will fall after it and remain there forever." Then the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Prayer is a trust, *wudu'* (ablution) is a trust, *ghusl* (washing the body) is a trust, weighing goods is a trust, and above all, keeping people's deposits is a trust." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Dishonesty in dealing with trusts is one of the signs of the Final Hour. A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked him, "When will the (Final) Hour take place?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered him, "When trust is lost, then wait for the

Hour." The man said, "How will that be lost?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "When power or authority comes into the hands of the unfit persons, then wait for the Hour." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The true Muslim should do anything that he is asked to do in the right way. He should realize that all the talents that Allah favored him with are on condition that he use them in doing what is good. Allah says ❨Indeed We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it❩ (Surat Al-Ahzab 33:72). They were afraid that they would be punished if they did not observe the trust in the way they should. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He who doesn't keep the trust has no faith, and he who doesn't pray has no belief. The position of the prayer in relation to religion is like the position of the head to the rest of the body." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

In Arabic, the word "*amanah*" (trust) is derived from the word "*iman*" (faith) because of the strong relation between them. The following funny story shows how some people are very eager to observe this moral value.

One person bought a house from another. While he was pulling it down, he found a jar full of gold. He took it to the person who sold him the house and told him, "Take your gold."

The seller said, "By Allah, this isn't mine and I shouldn't take something that I don't know anything about."

"I found it when I was pulling down the house that I bought from you. I bought a house, not gold."

"I don't know anything about this gold."

They took their case before the judge, who asked the buyer, "Do you have children?"

The buyer replied, "Yes, I have a boy."

The judge then asked the seller, "Do you have children?"

He replied, "Yes, I have a girl."

The judge said, "Marry the boy to the girl and spend the gold on their marriage."

The two men left happily.

A child must be eager to keep people's trusts, whether big or small. We pray to Allah to make us among those who are granted honesty with trusts.

A Warning for Children against False Testimony

Allah the All-Mighty says ❮And those who do not bear false witness❯ (Surat Al-Furqan 25:72). Refraining from false witness is a typical quality of Allah's servants. Allah compares false testimony to polytheism in two places in the Qur'an for being of the same magnitude. He says ❮And shun the abomination of idols, and shun the speaking of falsehood❯ (Surat Al-Hajj 22:30).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Should I inform you about the greatest of the great sins?" They said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah!" He said, "To join others in worship with Allah, and to be undutiful to one's parents." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then sat up after he had been reclining (on a pillow) and said, "And I warn you against giving a false statement," and he kept on saying that warning till we thought he would not stop. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

There is the story of two men, the first was from Kindah and the other was from Hadramaut. The two men were disputing before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon

him) over a piece of land in Yemen. The one from Hadramaut said, "Messenger of Allah, the father of this man has appropriated a piece of land that belongs to me." Upon this the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Do you have any evidence for what you say?" He said, "No, let him take an oath. Allah knows that it is my piece of land and that his father has taken it over from me." While the one from Kindah was preparing himself to take the oath, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) interrupted saying, "No one takes the money of others without right by a false oath but he will meet Allah leprous." Thereupon, the one from Kindah said, "It is his piece of land." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

If two persons are in dispute, it might be that one of them is more eloquent than the other, and in this case the money that he takes by his false witness will destine him to Hell-fire.

Why a Person Gives False Testimony

A boy or girl may resort to a false statement out of fear of punishment. Fear as a psychological phenomenon may result from:

The scary stories about ghosts and imaginary frightful creatures that some mothers tend to tell to their children.

The over-protection that some mothers tend to show to their children.

Bringing up some children lonely and isolated from other people.

In order to overcome this defect in the personality of the child we have to:

Bring the child up on faith and worshiping and teach him the idea of submitting himself to anything decreed by Allah. If we teach the child these meanings, he will never panic from any disaster that might befall him. This aspect of faith is demonstrated in the following *ayah*: ﴾Surely mankind was created impatient, fretful when evil befalls him, and when good befalls him, grudging — except those who pray, those who are steadfast to their prayers﴿ (Surat Al-Ma`arij 70:19-23).

Give the child credit to be responsible and to have freedom of action in a way that is appropriate to his age. Children could be included in the categories that the

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) referred to in his hadith: "All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Never scare a child by mentioning monsters and ghosts. If we do not do that, he will grow up brave. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer." (Narrated by Muslim).

The two following stories are living examples of how a child can conquer his fears. The first story happened when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was checking on his army before the Battle of Uhud. He suddenly saw a number of young boys who had not reached puberty squeezing themselves among the adults in order to be sent to jihad. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who had mercy on their young age, sent those who were young back home. Among those whom he sent back were Rafi` ibn Khadij and Samrah ibn Jundub. After a while, he accepted to take the first after he had been informed about his skill in throwing spears. Samrah went to his mother crying and said,

"The Prophet accepted Rafi` and did not accept me although when we wrestle I beat him." The news reached the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who brought both of them and ordered them to wrestle in front of him. Samrah managed to overcome Rafi`, and thus the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) accepted him in the army.

The other story was narrated by `Abdur-Rahman ibn `Auf: While I was standing in the battle array on the Day of Badr, I looked towards my right and my left, and found myself between two boys from the Ansar, Mu`adh ibn `Amr ibn Al-Jamuh and Mu`adh ibn `Afra. They were quite young in age. I wished I were between stronger persons. One of them made a sign to me and said, "Uncle, do you recognize Abu Jahl?" I said, "Yes. What do you want to do with him, my nephew?" He said, "I have been told that he abuses the Messenger of Allah and I will not leave him until one of us who is destined to die earlier is killed." I wondered at this. Then the other made a sign to me and said similar words. Soon after, I saw Abu Jahl. He was moving about among the men. I said to the two boys, "Don't you see? He is the man you are inquiring about." As soon as they heard this they

dashed towards him and struck him with their swords until he was killed. Then they returned to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and informed him. He asked, "Which of you killed him?" Each one of them said, "I killed him." He said, "Have you wiped your swords?" They said, "No." He examined their swords and said, "Both of you killed him." He then decided that the belongings of Abu Jahl should be handed over to Mu`adh ibn `Amr ibn Al- Jamuh and Mu`adh ibn `Afra." (Narrated by Muslim).

The children of the Prophet's Companions were taught bravery and heroism at the school of prophethood. Their mothers and the whole society pushed them to jihad. The Companion Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas said, "We used to teach our children the Prophet's battles and the verses of Qur'an."

The following is another story that gives an example of how children ought to be brave. The Caliph `Umar ibn Al-Khattab was once walking in one of the streets of Madinah. He passed by some children who were playing, among whom was `Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair. When the children saw `Umar, they all ran away except `Abdullah, who stood firm. `Umar asked him, "Why didn't you run away with the children?" The

boy answered, "I'm not a coward to run away and the road is not narrow so that I make way for you." Then `Umar asked him, "Have you observed your prayers, Ibn Az-Zubair?" `Abdullah answered, "Yes, Commander of the Believers, and I read Qur'an and hadith, and now it is time for recreation in order to be able to go back to serious activities." `Umar said to him, "May Allah reward you, son." `Abdullah answered, "The same to you, Commander of the Believers."

There is another exciting story that demonstrates the same method of bringing up children that the Companions adopted. When Caliph `Umar ibn `Abdul Aziz, known as The Fifth Righteous Caliph, was first appointed caliph, delegates from everywhere came to congratulate him. A boy of eleven from the delegate of Hijaz stepped forward and started speaking. The caliph said to him, "Step back and let someone older than you speak." The boy answered him, "May Allah support the Commander of the Believers. The value of any man is estimated by the two smallest parts in his body, namely the heart and the tongue. If Allah blesses a servant with an eloquent tongue and a faithful heart, then this servant is worthy of speaking. If it were a matter of age, then many

other Muslims would have been worthier of the caliphate than you." The caliph was amazed by the boy's boldness and he started reciting the following lines of poetry:

> Learn everybody, we're not born educated.
>
> Can the ignorant and the learned be equated?
>
> If the people's leader does not have knowledge,
>
> Then he is truly the least eminent in his village.

The boy started speaking in front of the caliph in a wonderful manner, and when he finished, the caliph asked him, "Whose son are you?" The boy answered, "I am the son of good manners." The caliph said, "What an excellent lineage!" Then he went on reciting poetry:

> Be whoever's son, this doesn't matter,
>
> The true man's value is in his manner.
>
> A boy should not say this is my father,
>
> But should always say that's me rather.

These are uncommon examples of daring young boys who had not yet reached puberty. They had such courage that was not attained by many men. They were taught by their fathers, who had been taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

Children should beware of false testimony and should learn not to praise themselves for a virtue that is not in them. False testimonies are lies. May Allah spare us the evils of lies.

Haya' Is Part of Faith

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) heard a man from the Ansar instructing his brother about *haya'*[15]. Upon this the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) remarked, "*Haya'* is an ingredient of faith." (Narrated by Muslim).

There is a big difference between *haya'* and timidity. Timidity is a common feature among children, which could be stronger in some children due to genetic and environmental reasons. Children who are allowed to mix with people are less likely to be timid. In order to overcome this negative characteristic of timidity, parents should always be eager to let their children accompany them in their visits, let them mix with people, and ask the children to talk to them, whether those people are young or old. This method will increase their

[15]- There is no single English word for this term. *Haya'* covers a number of concepts that are to be taken together. Among them are self-respect, modesty, shyness and sense of honor. (translator)

self-confidence and enable them to speak their opinions with no fear except of Allah.

Think of this example of the Prophet's treatment of children, as it appears in the following hadith, and how it leads the child to have a strong personality and helps him overcome this problem of shyness and timidity. A tumbler of milk (or water) was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who drank from it, while on his right side sat a boy who was the youngest of those present and on his left were old men. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, "Boy, will you allow me to give it to the old men?" The boy said, "Messenger of Allah, I will not give preference to anyone over me to drink the rest of it from which you have drunk." So the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave it to him. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

The following story that happened to `Abdullah ibn `Abbas also sheds light on the wisdom of the Companions in dealing with children. `Abdullah ibn `Abbas narrated: When I was a young boy below the age of maturity, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, during his caliphate, used to let me attend the consultations with the old people who had witnessed the

Battle of Badr. Some of them expressed their dissatisfaction with my presence. Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah said, "We never had something like that before. We have sons his age." Then `Umar said, "He is the only one, as you all know, that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prayed for saying, 'O Allah, teach him the understanding of the knowledge of Qur'an.'" One time `Umar let me attend with them for no reason except to show them my knowledge. `Umar asked them, "What do you think the meaning is of that *ayah* in which Allah says ❴When the victory granted by Allah and the conquest comes...❵ (Surat An-Nasr 110)?" Some of them said, "It's Allah commanding us to praise Him and ask His forgiveness when He grants us victory." The rest did not answer. Then `Umar said to me, "Is this right what they have said?" I said, "No." `Umar said, "Then what do you say about this?" I said, "Allah is announcing to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) the news of his own death soon. Allah was telling him, 'The Victory is the sign of your death.'" Then `Umar commented, "I don't know any other meaning for the *ayah* except what you have said." Then he said to the elders of Badr, "How can you blame me after what you

heard?" The elders of Badr were silent and `Umar smiled as if it had been enough for him.

Another story is narrated about the Caliph Al-Ma'moon. He entered the place of the treasury account books (*diwan*) and found a young boy hanging a pen on his ear. The caliph asked him, "Who are you?" The boy answered, "I am the one who was brought up in your kingdom, enjoying your bounties, and hoping to be your servant. I am Al-Hasan ibn Raja'." Al-Ma'moon admired his answer and said to those around him, "I made a comparison among the different mentalities and the wit of this boy outweighed them all. Promote this boy to a higher position."

The early Muslims used to bring their children up on openness rather than timidity and alienation. They encouraged them to attend meetings, even of the elders, and encouraged them to speak in front of them. Thus, parents should follow this example of education for their children. Children should be brought up on openness and boldness within the limits of politeness and respect for others and consideration for their feelings.

What Is the Difference between Timidity and *Haya'*?

Timidity reflects the child's feeling of alienation and reluctance to integrate in society. But *haya'* means the child's adhering to the ethics and virtues of Islam and shunning sins and wrong doings.

The Mother of the Believers `A'ishah reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was lying on the bed in my apartment with his thigh or his shank uncovered. Abu Bakr sought permission to enter. It was given to him and he conversed in that very state (the Prophet's thigh or shank uncovered). Then `Umar sought permission to enter. It was given to him and he conversed in that very state. Then `Uthman sought permission to enter. Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) sat up and set aright his clothes. `Uthman then entered and conversed and as he went out I said, "Abu Bakr entered and you did not stir and did not observe much care in arranging your clothes. Then `Umar entered and you did not stir and did not observe much care in arranging your clothes. Then `Uthman entered and you got up and set your clothes aright." Thereupon he said, "Should I not

show modesty to one to whom even the angels show modesty?" (Narrated by Muslim).

This situation is evidence that *haya'* is an inherent element in `Uthman's personality. The Prophet's description of him is an honor that elevates him to a noble status.

Haya' can appear in one's looks, words and actions. It is not considered timidity to teach children to respect those who are older than them, or to get them used to decent language, to *halal* food, to spending their time in acts of obedience to Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Every religion came up with its own virtue and the virtue that Islam came up with is *haya'*." (Narrated by Malik).

Some parents intend to teach their children obscene language when they utter their first words. They do it for fun. How do we expect those children to grow up with the virtue of *haya'* in their language?

Another aspect of *haya'* is that which is related to women's ornament. The clearest sign of a woman's *haya'* is to lower her gaze. Allah the All-Knowing says, ﴾Say to the believing men, that they cast down their glances, and guard their chastity...And say to believing women, that they cast

down their glances and guard their chastity...❳ (Surat An-Noor 24:30-31). And the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) narrated this divine saying (*hadith qudsi*): "The glance is like a poisonous arrow thrown by Iblis. If anyone refrains from sending it (to a forbidden thing) for fear of Me, I will give him instead a faith with such a sweetness that he can feel in his heart." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The Muslim who, whenever he looks at the beauty of a woman, lowers his gaze, Allah will incite him to practice a worshiping that he will feel its sweetness in his heart." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

Does lowering the gaze mean that we only look at the ground all the time? Of course not. But it means that both men and women believers should not look at the things that are forbidden for them to look at. Should a person walk in the street with closed eyes? Should men and women not see one another under any circumstances? And what about if a man suddenly glances at a woman? The answer is that the sudden glance is not a sin, but the sin is to send one's eyes again to gaze at the woman's beauty. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to `Ali ibn Abi Talib, "O `Ali, don't follow

one look by another. The first is for you whereas the second is not." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). Another Companion, Jarir ibn `Abdullah reported: I asked Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) about the sudden glance. He commanded me that I should turn away my eyes. (Narrated by Muslim).

The following story reveals the importance of *haya'* for some people. A woman came to a judge to claim that her husband owed her five hundred dinars from her dowry. The husband denied the claim. The judge asked him to bring his witnesses and the husband brought them over. The judge ordered one of the witnesses to go and look carefully at the wife's face in order to verify that she was the right person. The witness approached the wife and asked her to take off her veil. Thereupon the husband, who felt jealous of his wife that her face should show in front of a strange man, cried out to the judge that he owed that money to his wife. And when the wife saw that her husband sacrificed the money for the sake of not having her face displayed, she was grateful to him for this sign of respect and said to the judge, "O Judge, I give him the money as a gift, and I release him from this debt in this life

and in the Hereafter." The judge was astonished and said to those surrounding him, "Write this down in books of good behavior."

We have to educate our children to lower their gazes and to stop their ears from listening to either a bad thing or someone's secret, and this is the true meaning of *haya'*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made this supplication: "O Allah, I wish I don't reach the time when the scholar is not followed and the good-mannered person is not treated with modesty." How much are we in need of this virtue of *haya'* in our present time!

A Child Must Be Truthful

Allah the Exalted says ❮O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are truthful.❯ (Surat At-Taubah 9:119).

Among the characteristics that every Muslim child should adhere to is truthfulness in both words and actions. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Truth leads one to virtue, and virtue leads one to Paradise, and the person tells the truth until he is recorded as truthful. And a lie leads to obscenity, and obscenity leads to Hell, and the person tells a lie until he is recorded as a liar." (Narrated by Muslim).

Truthfulness for the Muslim is the basis of his faith. As long as one chooses the right way for himself and believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, he should be truthful in all that he does and says. He should realize that lying is the opposite of faith, as it threatens one's religion and spoils his good deeds. A lie means to tell something that is untrue. The worst type of lying is that against Allah. Allah says about this ❮And on the Day of Resurrection you shall see those who lied about Allah, their faces shall be blackened❯ (Surat Az-Zumar 39:60) and ❮A Day when the faces of some will be bright with

joy and others shall be dark with gloom...﴿ (Surat Al `Imran 3:106).

A true Muslim cannot approve of lying or cheating. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about this, "A true believer may get accustomed to all characteristics except cheating and lying." (Narrated by Ahmad). Consistent lying gets the liar out of the state of faith and takes him to that of hypocrisy. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Three are the sign of a hypocrite: when he speaks he tells a lie, when he makes a covenant he acts treacherously against it, and when he is trusted he betrays." (Narrated by Muslim). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Four characteristics make anyone who possesses them a sheer hypocrite. Anyone who possesses one of them possesses a characteristic of hypocrisy till he abandons it: when he talks he lies, when he makes a covenant he acts treacherously, when he is trusted he betrays, and when he quarrels he deviates from the truth." (Narrated by Muslim).

Thus a Muslim considers truthfulness to be the most assured way to win Allah's satisfaction and to lead him to safety in both this life and the Hereafter.

Children should learn to promote any good incentive that they may find in themselves and hold fast to the virtue of righteousness. This will lead them to the straight path and implant the seeds of strong faith and knowledge in their hearts. Truthfulness is not only a way to Allah's reward but also to success in life; whereas lying, however attractive it might appear at the beginning, is the way to loss in this life and punishment in the life to come. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Keep to truthfulness, as it is associated with virtue, and both of them are in Paradise. And abstain from lying, as it is associated with obscenity, and both of them are in Hell-fire." (Narrated by Ibn Hibban). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Seek truthfulness even if it appears to you as ruinous; actually it is the way to salvation." (Narrated by Ibn Abud-Dunya).

Whenever a person gets accustomed to telling the truth from his early age, either in times of fun or in times of seriousness, then truthfulness will become genuine in him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in this vein, "A servant of Allah is not a full believer till he quits lying even while joking." (Narrated by Ahmad). And he

(peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever says to a little boy, 'Come and I will give you this,' and he doesn't give it to him, then it is a lie." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Another hadith that supports the same meaning is this: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked him, "Messenger of Allah, what is the deed that leads to Paradise?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "Being truthful. If the servant of Allah is true, he will be virtuous, and if he is virtuous, then he is a believer, and if he is a believer, then he will enter Paradise." The man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) again, "What is the deed that leads to Hell?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "Lying. If a servant of Allah lies, he will be obscene, and if he is obscene, then he will enter Hell." (Narrated by Ahmad).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "(There are) four things (that) if they exist in you, don't ever regret missing any other thing in this world: to be able to keep people's trusts, to speak the truth, to have good behavior, and to have integrity in the way you earn the money for your food." (Narrated by Ahmad).

One day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was sitting with his Companions. Some of them, including `Abdullah ibn `Amr said, "Messenger of Allah, who is the best one among people?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one with a pure heart and truthful tongue." They asked, "We know what the truthful tongue is, but what does the pure heart mean?" He answered, "The pure heart is the heart that is pious and empty of vice, malice or envy." They asked, "Messenger of Allah, who might have such a heart?" He said, "The one who abhors life and longs for the Hereafter." They said, "We don't know anyone like this among us except Rafi`, the Prophet's servant, so who might have such a heart?" He said, "A believer with good behavior." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

Belief and disbelief do not coexist in one heart, and neither do truthfulness and lying. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in this vein, "Belief and disbelief do not coexist in one heart, neither do truthfulness and lying coexist, and neither do honesty and deceit coexist." (Narrated by Ahmad).

A tongue interprets what is in the heart and displays what is hidden in man's soul. Young as it is, the tongue has a great influence. Whoever loosens his tongue with no restraint may be taken by it to the deepest depth of Hell, and whoever controls his tongue and does not use it except for what is good for him in this life and the life to come will be saved. Thus the danger expected from the tongue is major and the only way out of it is through silence.

Mu`adh ibn Jabal asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Prophet of Allah, will what we say be held against us?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "May your mother be bereaved of you, Mu`adh! Is there anything that topples people on their faces — or he said on their noses — into Hell-fire other than the harvest of their tongues?" (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Children have to be honest in what they say in order to be among the virtuous. They have to have full confidence that truthfulness leads to rescue. The following story demonstrates this fact.

One day Imam Muhammad ibn Idris Ash-Shafi`i's mother woke him in the morning and said to him, "Wake up,

Muhammad! I have prepared for you sixty dinars to catch up with the caravan that is leaving to Madinah so that you can join the classes of the scholars there like Imam Malik and the others."

Ash-Shafi`i woke up, made *wudu'* and prayed two *rak`ahs*, then put the sixty dinars in his pocket.

His mother asked, "Have you finished eating?"

"Yes," he replied.

At the door he embraced his mother and said to her, "Advise me."

She replied, "I advise you to remain fearful of Allah and to be truthful in all situations because it is salvation for you."

Muhammad ibn Idris Ash-Shafi`i left with the caravan to Madinah, but on the way robbers attacked the caravan and robbed everybody in it of everything they had. They came to Ash-Shafi`i and asked him, "Do you have anything?"

Remembering his mother's advice, he replied, "Yes, I do."

"What do you have?"

"Sixty dinars."

The robbers thought that because he was a little boy he was talking nonsense, so they made fun of him and left. But when they went back to their chief and told him the story of the boy, he ordered them to bring him over. When they brought him, the chief looked at him from top to bottom and asked him, "Boy, what money do you have?"

"Sixty dinars."

"Where are they?"

Ash-Shafi`i held out his hands and said, "Here they are."

The chief turned the coins into his hands and counted them, astonished. He said, "Boy, are you lunatic?"

Ash-Shafi`i asked, "Why?"

The chief said, "How come you guide us to the place of your money?"

Ash-Shafi`i replied, "When I was leaving, my mother advised me to stick to the truth, as it rescues the one who says it, and what she said is true."

The chief said, "O Allah! You fear Allah and tell us the truth while we neither fear Allah nor are true even to ourselves?"

Upon this the chief ordered everything to be returned to the caravan because of the boy's truthfulness.

We ask Allah to write us down among those who are truthful.

The Qur'an Is Allah's Banquet

The Qur'an is the word of Allah. Jibril revealed it from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the last prophet. It is a constitution that contains all the Islamic laws and regulations, and it is the source of wisdom and good inspiration for the believers. Allah the All-Knowing and All-Wise explains in this Book everything concerning what is good for us and what is evil.

Reading the Qur'an is one of the best methods of worshiping and approaching Allah. The Companion `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The Qur'an is Allah's banquet[16], so let the children come to His banquet as frequently as they can. This Qur'an is Allah's cable. It is the clear light, the intercessor and the protector for whoever holds fast to it, and it is the salvation to whoever follows its

[16]- The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) compared the Qur'an to a banquet because people are invited to it to obtain benefit and spiritual comfort the same way they are invited to a banquet to have benefit and pleasure. (translator)

instructions. No one can accuse the Qur'an of having faults in it, and no one can prove it to have any imperfection in it that needs to be corrected. Its wonders never cease to exist, and it never becomes boring from being read frequently. Read it because Allah rewards you for reading every letter as equals ten good deeds. Do not think that *alif lam mim* is one letter, but *alif* is a letter, *lam* is a letter and *mim* is a letter." (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

The best people are those who learn and memorize the Qur'an. They learn its rules of recitation (*tajweed*) and understand its meanings, and most importantly they implement its orders and mold their characters on its model. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The most superior among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). Allah the All-Mighty made the recitation of the Qur'an a highly rewarded method of worshiping. He says ❬...recite of the Qur'an as much as is easy for you❭ (Surat Al-Muzammil 73:20).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) clarified in the following hadith the merits of reading the Qur'an. He said, "Whoever reads a letter of Allah's Book will be given a

reward of one good deed, then he will have ten times as much to this good deed. I don't say that *alif lam mim* is one letter, but *alif* is a letter, *lam* is a letter and *mim* is a letter." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

A child must learn that when he needs to talk to Allah, he should read Qur'an. The best of people is the one who reads it in a skilled way. He is promised to be elevated to the angels' rank. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) confirmed this saying, "The one who is proficient in the Qur'an is associated with the noble upright recording angels." And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Those who are the friends of the Qur'an are the friends and the loved ones of Allah." (Narrated by An-Nisa'i). Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A believer who recites the Qur'an is like an orange whose fragrance is sweet and taste is sweet; a believer who does not recite the Qur'an is like a date which has no fragrance but has a sweet taste; and the hypocrite who recites the Qur'an is like basil whose fragrance is sweet, but whose taste is bitter; and a hypocrite who does not read the Qur'an is like a colocynth

that has no fragrance and has bitter taste." (Narrated by Muslim).

Allah's banquet is available all the time for the believers to eat from whatever they want. It nourishes the heart, the mind and the soul. `A'ishah reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in this context, "The one who is proficient in the Qur'an is associated with the noble upright recording angels; and he who falters in it and finds it difficult for him will have a double reward." (Narrated by Muslim). The two rewards that are referred to are the reward for recitation and the reward for facing the difficulty.

In his advice to Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Keep to the recitation of the Qur'an, it will be a light for you on the earth and a wealth stored for you in the Hereafter." (Narrated by Ibn Hibban).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to encourage people to read the Qur'an and to compare them to one another according to the amount of Qur'an they knew. He also advised those unable to read it to listen to it so that they would not deprive themselves of its spiritual effect. The

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone listens to one of Allah's verses it will be written to him as a good deed, but if anyone recites it, it will be a light for him on the Day of Resurrection." (Narrated by Ahmad).

The Mother of the Believers `A'ishah described the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as "His manners were Qur'an." This means that he molded his character on the model depicted by the instructions of the Qur'an.

Allah describes Qur'an by saying ❮Indeed! This Qur'an guides to the Way that is most Right, and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds, that they shall have a great reward.❯ (Surat Al-Isra' 17:9). And He also says ❮A book We have revealed for you to guide people out of darkness into Light❯ (Surat Ibrahim 14:1). And He says ❮And We have revealed to you the Book expounding all things, and as a guidance and a Mercy, and glad tidings to all Muslims❯ (Surat An-Nahl 16:89). In this last *ayah*, Allah says that there is no excuse for anybody to say that he does not know the *haram* or the *halal* after reading the Qur'an because it explains everything to Muslims. So everyone has to hasten

and submit himself to what the Qur'an ordains before the terrible Day comes.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) attracted people to reading the Qur'an with this spiritual image: "Those persons who assemble in a house among the houses of Allah (mosque) and recite the Book of Allah and they learn and teach Qur'an (among themselves), there would descend upon them tranquility, and mercy would cover them, and the angels would surround them, and Allah makes a mention of them in the presence of those near Him." (Narrated by Muslim). What honor could be greater than that? In addition to tranquility and mercy, Allah will mention them to His angels. To attract people more, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) promised the people that the Qur'an will be their intercessor if they read it on the Day when no money or children will be of any benefit to them.

"Recite the Qur'an. It comes on the Day of Resurrection as an intercessor to the one who recited it." (Narrated by Muslim). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said again, "Fasting and reciting the Qur'an will intercede for a servant. Fasting will say, 'O Lord, I prevented him from

eating and drinking during the day time, so accept my intercession for him.' Then the Qur'an will say, 'O Lord, I prevented him from sleeping at night, so accept my intercession for him.' Therefore, Allah accepts their intercession." (Narrated by Ahmad).

The rules of dealing with the Qur'an are to memorize it, read it frequently, keep to the manners of reading it, respect it and show humility while reading it, act according to the laws and regulations revealed in it, and be careful not to disobey any of its orders. Those who disobey the Qur'an's orders although they read it will be the first punished in Hell-fire. On the other hand, Allah promised a great reward for those who not only read the Qur'an but also act according to what it says, such as praying, giving *zakah* and avoiding what is forbidden. Allah says ❨Those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer, and expend of that We have bestowed on them, secretly and openly, hope for a bargain that will not come to nothing.❩ (Surat Fatir 35:29).

Every child should make the Qur'an his companion and friend in time of solitude and when he is among others. He should take it as a law of life for himself and for his family. The Qur'an is a banquet that no one should miss.

Sadaqah Is Due for the Poor

A child should know that if he pays *sadaqah* from honestly earned money, Allah will double the reward for him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If one gives charity that equals one date-fruit from the honestly earned money, Allah takes it in His right hand and then enlarges its reward for the person (who has given it), as anyone of you brings his baby horse, so much so that it becomes like a mountain." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

A child may say: I'm still young and I don't work to earn the money needed for giving *sadaqah*. Yet he must be told: It is true that you take a daily allowance from your father that is hardly sufficient for your needs, yet if your faith spurs you to overcome your desires, then you will help whomever is in need or is hungry with whatever little you may have. And remember that a woman was moved from Hell-fire for a half date that she donated in charity. If you are consistent in attempting charitable deeds, then goodness will become an integral part of your personality, and you have to learn that *sadaqah* removes sin like water puts off fire.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah enlarges the reward of one date or a bite of bread for the person (who has given them), as anyone of you brings his baby horse, so much so that it becomes like a mountain." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The same meaning is confirmed in the following *ayah* of Qur'an: ﴾Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten-fold the like of it﴿ (Surat Al-An`am 6:160). And Allah may like to enlarge it till it becomes as big as a mountain.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once said to `A'ishah, "`A'ishah, protect yourself from Hell-fire even with half a date. It satisfies the hungry man as well as the full." (Narrated by Ahmad).

A small piece of date can feed a hungry man, and Allah will consider it to be of great value. Thus a child should know that if he has half a dollar and he spends only five cents on the poor, the remainder — as it may appear to him and to everybody — will be forty-five cents, but actually they are ninety-five cents because every cent that he gives away will become ten times more than its value after Allah enlarges it for him. He may ask whether this enlargement will happen

only in the Hereafter, but he has to have the certainty that the Hereafter is a natural extension of this life that we live in.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Charity does not in any way decrease the wealth; and the servant who forgives, Allah adds to his respect; and the one who shows humility, Allah elevates him in the estimation of people." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Charity does not in any way decrease the wealth. If a servant stretches out his hand with a *sadaqah*, it will fall into Allah's hand before it falls into the one who is asking for it, and if a servant opens his door to begging while he is in no need, Allah will open for him the door of poverty." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

Sadaqah falls into Allah's hand before the poor man's. This is why the Mother of the Believers `A'ishah used to moisten the dirham (a coin) given as a *sadaqah* with fragrance. When she was asked why she did so, she answered, "Because it falls into the hand of Allah before it falls into the hand of the poor and needy."

In one of his speeches, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to the people, "O people, return to Allah in

repentance before you die, hasten to the good deeds before you get busy, and strengthen the link between you and Allah by increasing your *dhikr* (mentioning Allah) and by giving *sadaqah* both in secret and in public. If you do that, Allah will grant you provision, victory and comfort." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

The *sadaqah* that is given in secret is better than the one that is given in public. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Seven are the persons whom Allah will give protection with His Shade on the Day when there will be no shade but that of Him (i.e., The Day of Judgment). They are: the just ruler; a young man who grew up with the worship of Allah; a person whose heart is attached to the mosques; two persons who love and meet each other and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man whom a beautiful woman of high rank seduces but he rejects saying, 'I fear Allah'; a person who gives charity and conceals it to such an extent that the right hand does not know what the left has given; and a person who remembered Allah in privacy and his eyes shed tears." (Narrated by Muslim).

The shade that is mentioned in this hadith means Allah's protection and care, not the shade from the sun, and the hadith starts with the ruler because he has the heaviest responsibility towards the good of his people. The hadith stresses the importance of the secret *sadaqah* because it reflects the person's sincerity and that he is far removed from boasting or showing off. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave the example of the right hand and the left hand because of their closeness to each other. The same applies to the remembrance of Allah in private because it is a sign of sincerity and being removed from vanity.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "*Sadaqah* puts off the anger of the Exalted Lord," and, "Allah takes three persons to Paradise for giving (the poor) one bite of bread and a handful of dates or any other thing that may benefit him. The three persons are the head of the household, the wife and the servant who hands them to the poor." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then continued, "Praise be to Allah that He has not forgotten even our servants." (Both narrated by At-Tabarani).

Here is another noble situation that demonstrates the value of sacrificing money. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once slaughtered a lamb, then gave some of it as charity. He asked `A'ishah, "What is remaining from the lamb?" She answered, "Only one leg remains." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) corrected her, "All of it remains except the leg." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) attracted people to spending money to clothe the poor by saying, "If a Muslim offers clothes to another Muslim, he will be in Allah's protection as long as the poor still has a piece of rag (of that clothes) on him." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If a Muslim offers clothes to a naked Muslim, Allah will clothe him from the green silk of Paradise; and if a Muslim feeds a hungry Muslim, Allah will feed him from the fruits of Paradise; and if a Muslim offers a thirsty Muslim a drink, Allah will offer him *Ar-Rahiq Al-Makhtoom* (the drink of Paradise)." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

If a child finds only a little money to clothe or feed the poor, this little money, being his best effort, is better than a

large amount. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "One dirham is better than one hundred thousand dirhams." They asked him, "How is that, Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "A man may have a lot of money and he takes from it one hundred thousand dirhams, and another poor man who has only two dirhams and he takes one of them to give as charity." (Narrated by An-Nisa'i).

If a child does not find money or clothes to pay as *sadaqah*, he should know that our religion makes it easy for him by making the smile at his brother's face a *sadaqah.* May Allah protect us and guide our steps on the straight path and make our hand the upper one, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The upper hand is better than the lower hand."

Asking Permission in Visiting

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Don't approach houses by facing their doors but rather from the sides (of the door), and if permission is given to you then enter, otherwise go back." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). There are two recommendations in this hadith. The first is that one should not face the door so that when it opens he does not set eyes on something that he should not see, such as if the lady of the house is sitting in light clothes or part of her body is not well covered, or maybe the head of the house is sitting in a free position and he does not want anybody to see him. The second recommendation is that one should seek permission before entering another house, either by knocking on the door or by using the bell. If one is permitted to enter, then he enters, but if not, he should return.

Allah says ﴾O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission, and given salutations to the people therein﴿ (Surat An-Noor 24:27). The following situation also illustrates the importance of asking permission. A man peeped through a round hole into the dwelling place of the Prophet (peace and blessings be

upon him) while the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was holding an iron comb with which he was scratching his head. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Had I known you were looking through the hole, I would have pierced your eye with it. Verily the order of taking permission to enter has been enjoined because of that sight (that one should not look unlawfully at the state of others)." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said again, "He who peeps into the house of people without their consent transgresses a limit that he should not transgress, and it is permissible for them to put out his eyes. But if a man passes by an open place that does not have a curtain or a door and sees the *`awrah*[17] of the people inside, then it is not his mistake but theirs." (Narrated by Ahmad).

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[17]- *`Awrah* refers to any private thing of a person that other people should not look at, such as the parts of the body that are not allowed to show, or any other state or secret that a person does not want to display in front of others. (translator)

How to Seek Permission

The following situation explains how to seek permission. When Safwan ibn Umaiyah embraced Islam after the opening of Makkah, he sent his half brother, Kildah ibn Jabalah, to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) with some milk, a young antelope and some cucumbers. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) at that time was somewhere in upper Makkah. The man entered without greeting, so the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told him, "Go back and say, '*As-Salaamu `alaikum.* May I come in?'" (Narrated by Ahmad).

Another time, a man from the tribe of `Amir asked permission of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to enter by saying, "Shall I come in?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his servant, "Go out to that person and teach him how to ask permission. Tell him to say, '*As-Salaamu `alaikum.* May I come in?'" The man heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and then said, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum.* May I come in?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) permitted him and he entered. (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

The Companion Jabir ibn `Abdullah narrated: I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in order to consult him regarding my father's debt. When I knocked on the door, he asked, "Who is that?" I replied, "I." He said, "I? I?" He repeated it as if he disliked it." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

Again, `Ali ibn `Asim came to the house of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah at Basrah and knocked on the door.

Al-Mughirah asked, "Who is that?"

`Ali said, "I."

Al-Mughirah said, "I don't have a friend whose name is 'I'." Then he went out and said to `Ali, "Jabir ibn `Abdullah said, 'I came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). When I knocked on the door he asked: Who is that? I replied: I. He said: I? I? He repeated it as if he disliked it.'"

How Many Times Should One Ask Permission?

One is considered permitted to enter a house when the people in the house open the door for him and welcome him; whereas he is not considered permitted when the people in the house do not answer the door or they apologize that the

intended person is either busy or not in. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Permission should be sought three times, and if you are permitted then go in, otherwise go back." (Narrated by Muslim). The reason for the three times is explained in the following hadith: "Permission should be sought three times. At the first you listen, at the second you set yourselves aright, and at the third you are either permitted or you go back." (Narrated by Ad-Darqatni). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stressed this by saying, "If anyone of you asks permission three times and he is not permitted, then he should go back." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once visited Sa`d ibn `Ubadah and said, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum.*" Sa`d responded to the Prophet's greeting in a murmur that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not hear. His son Qais said to him, "Don't you permit the Messenger of Allah to enter?" Sa`d answered, "Let him extend more of his blessings on us." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) repeated, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum*" and again Sa`d responded to the Prophet's greeting in a murmur. Then the

Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) repeated, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum,*" and left. Sa`d followed him and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I heard your greetings and I greeted back but in a low voice so that you would extend more peace on us." When they returned together, Sa`d ordered a bath to be prepared for the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who washed himself. Then Sa`d gave him a shawl died with saffron and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) wrapped himself with it and raised his hands in *du`a'* (supplication) saying, "O Allah, bestow Your blessings and mercy on the family of Sa`d ibn `Ubadah." After the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had eaten, he wanted to leave. Sa`d offered him a donkey to ride and said to his son, "Qais, accompany the Messenger of Allah." Qais narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told me to ride but I refused. Then he said to me, "You either ride or leave." So I left. (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari reported that he went to `Umar ibn Al- Khattab and asked permission three times saying, "*As-Salaamu `alaikum,* here is Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari and here is `Abdullah ibn Qais," but `Umar did not respond to him, so he

left. `Umar said, "Bring him back to me, bring him back to me." Then he asked him, "Abu Musa, what made you go back while we were busy in some work?" He said, "I heard Allah's Messenger say, 'Permission should be sought thrice, and if you are permitted then go in, otherwise go back.'" `Umar said, "Bring a witness to this fact." Abu Musa went and then came back with Ubaiy ibn Ka`b, who said, "I heard Allah's Messenger saying so. Do not be a torment for the Companions of Allah's Messenger." (Narrated by Muslim).

How to Ask Permission

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was once asked about seeking permission to enter houses and he said, "He whose eyes enter the house before he asks permission and greets the people should not be permitted, and he is considered as deliberately disobeying Allah." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If permission is asked from a man while he is praying, he gives the permission by saying, '*Subhan Allah.*' But if permission is asked from a woman while she is praying, she gives the permission by clapping her hands." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

Abu Aiyoob Al-Ansari asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "How is permission taken?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) answered, "That a person says once, '*Subhan Allah*, *Allahu Akbar*, *Al-Hamdu lillah* (Exalted be Allah, Allah is the Greatest, All Praise be to Allah),' then he clears his voice loudly and then asks the permission from the people in the house." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Is an Invitation Considered Permission?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The messenger of one man to another is his permission." (Narrated by Abu Dawood). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If any one of you is invited to food and he comes with the messenger, then this is considered a permission given to him." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

If One Is Asked to Go Back, He Should Go Back

Allah the All-Wise says ﴾And if you are told, "Go back", then go back, that is more pure for you﴿ (Surat An-Noor 24:28). This *ayah* presents an important rule, that if before or after you ask permission you are asked to go back, you have to turn away. The Prophet (peace and blessings be

upon him) himself did that when he did not hear Sa`d ibn `Ubadah's answer clearly.

Should One Ask Permission before Entering His Mother or Sister's Place?

When a person wants to enter his wife's ro m, he does not have to seek permission but he should greet her before he enters. Zainab, the wife of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood, said, "When `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood came back from outside, he stood at the door and cleared his voice (loudly), as he hated to suddenly see something of us that we hated him to see." Thus, a child must learn that when he enters his house, he has to greet whoever is inside, and if his mother or sister happens to be inside, he must make any sound to draw their attention to his presence. Maybe they are sitting in a state that they dislike him to see.

Anas ibn Malikk confirmed this saying, "A man should seek permission before he gets into a place where his mother or sister is staying." This hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) supports the same meaning: A man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), "Should I ask my mother's permission?" The Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him) said, "Yes." The man said, "I serve her." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Ask her permission." The man repeated his comment three times, so the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him, "Do you want to see her naked?" The man said, "No." Thereupon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Then ask her permission." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). `Abdullah ibn Mas`ood supported the same meaning saying, "You have to seek permission from your mothers to enter their places."

Asking Permission during the Three Private Times

Allah the All-Mighty says ﴾O you who believe! Let those whom your right hands possess, and those who have not attained puberty, ask your permission three times before they come to your bedroom before the dawn prayer, and when you put off your garments at noon, and after the evening prayer. These are three times of privacy for you. Outside these three times there is no blame on you or them, if you move about attending to each other.﴿ (Surat An-Noor 24:58).

The story behind the revelation of this *ayah* is that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sent a boy named

Mudlij from Al- Ansar to `Umar at noontime to invite him. He found him sleeping with his door closed. The boy knocked at the door, then called him, and then entered the house to wake him. When `Umar was getting up, part of his body showed, so he said, "I wish that Allah would forbid our children, wives and servants to get in while we are in such a state (i.e., uncovered because of sleeping)." Afterward `Umar went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and he found that this *ayah* of the permission had been revealed to him. Upon this he prostrated in gratitude to Allah.

Ibn `Abbas said about this *ayah*, "I commanded my girl slave to seek permission before she entered my place."

Taking permission is one of the rules of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Let every boy and girl follow his example.

Purification Is Half of Faith

Allah says ❮Surely Allah loves those who repent, and He loves those who are always pure.❯ (Surat Al-Baqarah 2:222).

Lexically speaking, purity means cleanliness, but as a religious term it means the cleanliness of body, clothes and heart. Purity is of three types: purity from *najasah* (impurity) of the body (like when one defecates or urinates, etc.), purity from *najasah* of clothes and place, and purity from the dirty things that grow naturally on the body such as nails and underarm hair, etc.

When Allah revealed the *ayah* ❮A mosque that was founded upon piety from the very first day is more worthy to be stood in, in it are men who love to purify themselves, and Allah loves those who purify themselves❯ (Surat At-Taubah 9:108), the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to the people who were praying at Qiba' Mosque, "O you people of the Ansar, Allah admires your method of purification. What is this purification that you perform?" They answered, "O Messenger of Allah, we make *wudu'* (ablution) for the prayers and we make *ghusl* (wash the whole body) if we

happen to have a major impurity." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, "Is there anything else?" They said, "No, but if anyone of us comes from the toilet, he likes to clean himself with water." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "This is it, keep to it." (Narrated by Qatani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) himself used to use both stones and water to clean himself after relieving himself (excreting or urinating), the stones to remove the dirt and the water to purify the body.

Allah says ❨O you encovered, arise and warn! And magnify your Lord! And purify your garments!❩ (Surat Al-Mudaththir 74:1-4) and ❨O you who believe! When you intend to pray, you must wash your faces, your hands up to the elbow, wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of impurity wash your whole body.❩ (Surat Al-Ma'idah 5:6).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stressed the importance of purification by saying, "Cleanliness is half of faith and *al-hamdu lillah* fills the scale, and *subhan Allah* and *al-hamdu lillah* fill up what is between the heavens and

the earth, and prayer is a light and charity is a proof of one's faith, and endurance is a brightness and Qur'an is a proof on your behalf or against you. All men go out early in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about the excellence of *wudu'* (ablution), "He who performed *wudu'* well, his sins would come out from his body, even coming out from under his nails." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When a Muslim or a believer washes his face in the course of *wudu'*, every sin he contemplated with his eyes will be washed away from his face along with the water. When he washes his hands, every sin they wrought will be effaced from his hands with the water, or with the last drop of water. And when he washes his feet, every sin towards which his feet have walked will be washed away with the water or with the last drop of water, with the result that he comes out pure from all sins." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said to the Companions, "Should I not suggest to you that by

which Allah obliterates the sins and elevates the ranks of a man?" They said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." He said, "Performing *wudu'* thoroughly despite odds, transversing of more paces towards the mosque, and waiting for the next prayer after observing a prayer, and that is mindfulness, that is mindfulness." (Narrated by Muslim).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone among you performs the *wudu'*, and then completes the *wudu'* well and then says, 'I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger,' the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter from whichever of them he wishes." (Narrated by Muslim).

Purification is the cleanliness of bodies as prayer is the cleanliness of souls. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Just see, could anything of the filthiness remain on the body of anyone of you if there were a river at his door in which he washed himself five times daily?" They said, "Nothing of his filthiness would remain on his body." He said, "That is like the five prayers by which Allah obliterates sins." (Narrated by Muslim).

In this hadith the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned "river" and not a container of water, thus suggesting the purity of the quality and the endlessness of the amount of water. So what if one of us had such a river in front of his own house and he washed himself from it, would there be any dirt remaining on his body? The answer is what the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, there would be no dirt remaining on his body.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) expressed how indispensable *wudu'* is to the prayers, saying, "The prayer of none among you is accepted in a state of impurity till he performs *wudu'*." (Narrated by Muslim).

Before one performs *wudu'*, he should mention the name of Allah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "No prayer is accepted without *wudu'*, and no *wudu'* is accepted without mentioning the name of Allah before it." (Narrated by `Abdur-Raziq). He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "Whoever performs *wudu'* and mentions the name of Allah before it, then he purifies his whole body, and whoever performs *wudu'* and does not mention the name of Allah before it, then he only purified the

parts that he washed. Once one finishes his *wudu'* he should say, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger,' and then ask Allah to bestow His blessings on me. The gates of mercy will be open for him." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made *takhleel* (rinsing between the fingers and toes with water) desirable for people. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When you perform *wudu'*, run the water between your fingers and toes." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If you run the water between your fingers, Allah will not run the fire between them. Woe to heels because of Hell-fire." (Narrated by Ad-Darqatni). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If anyone does not run the water between his fingers and toes, Allah will run fire between them on the Day of Judgment." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

While one is performing *wudu'*, he should sniff up water into his nose and blow it out three times. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about that, "When anyone of you awakes up from sleep and performs *wudu'*, he

must clean his nose three times, for the devil spends the night in the interior of his nose." (Narrated by Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) urged Muslims to perform their *wudu'* in a perfect manner, saying, "When one of you performs *wudu'*, he should rinse his mouth three times because this takes away the sins from his face. He should wash his face and his arms to the elbows, wipe his head three times, inserts his fingers in his ears (to clean them) and then pour the water three times on his feet." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "How perfect are those who make *takhleel* during *wudu'* and during eating. *Takhleel* during *wudu'* means that one runs the water in his mouth, his nose and between his fingers and toes. As for *takhleel* during eating, it means to clean (your teeth) from food. There is nothing more repugnant to the two angels than seeing food stuck between the teeth of one while he is praying." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah will have mercy on those men and women who keep to the habit of *takhleel*," and, "Rinsing one's mouth and nose is part of *wudu'* which the

prayer is not completed without. And the ears are part of the head." (Both narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded Muslims to observe *isbagh* (completion or perfection of *wudu'* so that it reaches well all the intended parts), saying, "I was commanded to complete the *wudu'*," (Narrated by Ad-Darami) and, "Complete your *wudu'*." (Narrated by An-Nisa'i).

A child must be instructed that when he performs *wudu'*, he has to run the water in both his mouth and nose three times and wash his face three times. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If one performs *wudu'* once, he is performing the basic obligatory *wudu'*. If he performs it twice, then he will get a double reward. And if he performs it three times, then he is performing my *wudu'* and the *wudu'* of all the prophets who came before me." (Narrated by Ahmad).

How to Observe *Isbagh*?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Purification should be thrice and wiping the head should be once." (Narrated by Ad- Dailami).

A child must be directed to start *wudu'* with the right hand. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When you perform *wudu'*, he has to start with the right side." (Narrated by Ibn Majah). Also, when he performs *wudu'* he should run the water in his eyes. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When you perform *wudu'*, wet your eyes with the water of *wudu'* and do not shake the water off from your hands, as this makes like the devil's propeller." (Narrated by Ad- Dailami).

It is preferred not to dry oneself from the water of *wudu'*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "It is acceptable for whoever performs *wudu'* and then wipes himself with a clean cloth, but the one who does not is better because *wudu'* will be weighed up with the rest of one's deeds on the Day of Judgment." (Narrated by Tammam).

Does *Isbagh* Mean to Be Wasteful in Using Water?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to a man whom he saw performing *wudu'* with excessive water, "Don't be extravagant, don't be extravagant." (Narrated by Muslim). Another time, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prohibited a man from wasting water during *wudu'*

by saying, "Don't be extravagant." The man said, "Is there extravagance in *wudu'*?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Yes, and there is extravagance in everything." (Narrated by Al-Hakim).

How Much Water Should One Use in *Wudu'*?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Two *rotls* (a certain weigh that was used at that time) of water are enough for *wudu'*." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Wudu' Protects the Muslim

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "O son, if you manage to keep in a state of *wudu'* all the time, then do it because when the angel of death takes someone's soul while he has *wudu'*, then it will be written for him a martyrdom." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

How Will the Prophet Recognize His *Ummah* on the Day of Resurrection?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There will be none of my *ummah* (nation) that I will not recognize on the Day of Resurrection." The Companions asked, "How will you recognize those persons of your *ummah*

who have not yet been born?" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Suppose a man had horses with white blazes on their foreheads and white spots on their legs among horses that were all black. Tell me, would he not recognize his own horses?" They said, "Certainly, Messenger of Allah." He said, "They will come with white faces and arms and legs because of *wudu'*." (Narrated by Muslim). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "My people will come with bright faces and bright hands and feet on account of the marks of *wudu'*, so he who can increase the luster of his forehead and that of his hands and legs should do so." (Narrated by Muslim).

Is it Permissible to Perform *Wudu'* in the Toilet?

Performing *wudu'* in the toilet[18] decreases one's reward. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about this, "Don't make *wudu'* in toilets where you are used to

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[18]- That is, the room that contains the toilet, not the toilet bowl. In traditional homes in Muslim countries, the toilet facilities and bathing facilities are separated. (editor)

urinating because a believer's *wudu'* is being weighed with his good deeds." (Narrated by Ad-Dailami).

After one performs his *wudu'* perfectly, he should use the tooth stick (*siwak* or *miswak*) before he prays. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged us saying, "The *siwak* is a purification for the mouth and pleasing to the Lord," (Narrated by Ahmad) and, "The *siwak* is half of *wudu'* and *wudu'* is half of faith." (Narrated by Rustah).

Using the *siwak* is an act of natural cleanliness. One would rather pray two *rak`ahs* after using the *siwak* than pray seventy *rak`ahs* without using it. There are ten benefits for using the *siwak*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The *siwak* has ten useful characteristics: it purifies the mouth, strengthens the gum, sharpens the eyesight, removes the holes, achieves sunnah, pleases the angels, satisfies the Lord, increases rewards and keeps the stomach healthy." (Narrated by Abush-Shaikh).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) indicated the great importance of *siwak* when he said, "Were it not a hardship on my *ummah*, I would have ordered them to use *siwak* for every *wudu'*." (Narrated by Al-Baihaqi).

What Are the Things That Nullify *Wudu'*?

Touching one's own sexual organs without any barriers. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever touches his sexual organ cannot pray until he performs *wudu'*." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Laughing during the prayer. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever laughs loudly while he is praying has to repeat both *wudu'* and prayer." (Narrated by Al-Khatib).

Releasing gas. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If one of you passes gas with or without sound he should make *wudu'*. Allah is not shy to say what is right." (Narrated by `Abdur-Raziq).

Deep sleep. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "*Wudu'* is not due except for the one who sleeps in a lying down position because when one lies down, his joints relax." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

To conclude, *wudu'* is cleanliness, and cleanliness is faith, and faith accompanies one to Paradise.

Prayer Is the Basis of Religion

In the previous chapter, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) illustrated for us the privilege of *wudu'*, which is the key to prayer. So what about prayer itself, which is considered the basis of religion?

Mu`adh ibn Jabal narrated: I said, "Messenger of Allah, tell me of an act that will take me into Paradise and will keep me away from Hell-fire." He said, "You have asked me about a major matter, yet it is easy for him for whom Allah the All-Mighty makes it easy. You should worship Allah, associating nothing with Him; you should perform the prayers; you should pay the *zakah*; you should fast in Ramadan; and you should make the Hajj (Pilgrimage) to the House (Ka`bah)." Then he said, "Shall I not show you the gates of goodness? Fasting, which is a shield; charity, which extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire; and the praying of a man in the depth of the night." Then he recited ﴾They forsake their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and hope, and they expend of that We have bestowed upon them. No soul knows what joys of the eye have been kept hidden for them as reward for their deeds﴿ (Surat As-Sajdah 32:16-17). Then he said, "Shall I not

tell you of the peak of the matter, its pillar and its topmost part? The peak of the matter is Islam; the pillar is prayer; and its topmost part is jihad." Then he said, "Shall I not tell you of the controlling of all that?" I said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah." And he took hold of his tongue and said, "Restrain this." I said, "O Prophet of Allah, will what we say be held against us?" He said, "May your mother be bereaved of you, Mu`adh! Is there anything that topples people on their faces — or he said on their noses — into Hell-fire other than the harvest of their tongue?" (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

This hadith sheds light on the importance of prayer as the cornerstone of this religion. All the laws and duties in Islam were revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on earth except for the commandment for prayer, which was revealed in the Heavens during his journey of *Mi`raj*. Allah prescribed five daily prayers, the reward of which equals fifty times more. Prayer purifies the soul. This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said about it, "Islam has been built on five (pillars): testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayers, paying the *zakah* (alms),

making the Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (Ka`bah), and fasting in Ramadan." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The five daily prayers and the two consecutive Friday prayers obliterate the sins that are committed between them except for the major ones," (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi) and, "He who performs *wudu'* (ablution) like mine and then stands for Zuhr (noon) Prayer, all that he may have done between the morning and the noon prayers would be forgiven for him. Then he stands for the `Asr (afternoon ) Prayer, all that between the noon and afternoon prayers would be forgiven for him. Then he stands to pray Maghrib (sunset) Prayer, all that he may have done between the afternoon and sunset prayers would be forgiven for him. Then he stands to pray `Isha' (night) Prayer, all that he may have done between the sunset and night prayers would be forgiven for him, and these are the good deeds that remove the bad deeds." (Narrated by Ahmad).

Prayer is the first thing that the servants of Allah will be asked about on the Day of Judgment. Be devoted to praying in the mosque.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "A man's prayer in congregation is more valuable than twenty degrees and some above them as compared with his prayer in his house and his market. For when he performs *wudu'* well, than goes out to the mosque, and he is impelled to do so only by the love of congregational prayer, he has no other objective before him but prayer, he does not take a step without being raised a degree for it and having a sin remitted for it, till he enters the mosque. And when he is busy in prayer after having entered the mosque, the angels continue to invoke blessing on him as long as he is in his place of worship, saying, 'O Allah, show him mercy and pardon him! Accept his repentance.' (And the angels continue this supplication for him) so long as he does not do any harm in it, or as long as his *wudu'* is not broken." (Narrated by Muslim).

Again, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in favor of praying in the mosque, "Whoever goes to the congregational prayer in the mosque, one step remits a sin and one other step adds a good deed. This happens to him on his way to and from the mosque." (Narrated by Ahmad). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever performs

wudu' perfectly and walks to perform the obligatory prayer with the imam, Allah will forgive his sin for him." (Narrated by Ibn Khuzaimah).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made walking to mosques by night desirable to people by giving them this glad tiding: "He who walks in the darkness of the night to the mosque will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment with a light." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Give those who walk to the mosques in the darkness the glad tidings that they will have platforms of light on the Day of Judgment, and when people get scared they don't," (Narrated by At-Tabarani) and, "Give those who walk constantly to the mosques by night the glad tiding of being in complete light on the Day of Judgment." (Narrated by Abu Dawood).

Among the seven persons who will be included in Allah's protection on the Day of Judgment are those whose hearts are attached to mosques. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Seven are the persons whom Allah will give protection with His Shade on the Day when there will be no shade but that of Him (i.e., The Day of

Judgment). They are: the just ruler; a young man who grew up with the worship of Allah; a person whose heart is attached to the mosques; two persons who love and meet each other and depart from each other for the sake of Allah; a man whom a beautiful woman of high rank seduces but he rejects saying, 'I fear Allah'; a person who gives charity and conceals it to such an extent that the right hand does not know what the left has given; and a person who remembered Allah in privacy and his eyes shed tears." (Narrated by Muslim).

We have to acknowledge the excellence of the first row in the congregational prayer over the back rows. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "If the people knew the reward for pronouncing the *adhan* and for standing in the first row and found no other way to get that except by drawing lots (racing), they would draw lots." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The one in the first row will have Allah's pardon invoked for him three times, and the one in the second row two times." (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah and His angels extend their blessing for those in the first

row." They asked, "And those in the second?" He said, "And for those who are in the second." And he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Straighten your rows, and put your shoulders close to one another, and be gentle to each other, and fill in the gaps because Satan passes through what is between you like a small sheep." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Companion An-Nu'man ibn Al-Bashir said that he heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say, "Allah and His angels send down their blessing on those in the first row and those in the first rows." (Narrated by Ahmad).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) attracted people to go and stay frequently in the mosques by saying, "If you see a man who goes habitually to the mosques, then bear witness for him that he has faith. Allah the Exalted says ❴But is only those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, who establish prayer and pay alms, and fear none but Allah, who are worthy of maintaining the mosques of Allah...❵ (Surat At-Taubah 9:18)." (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).

Abu Ad-Darda' also said that he heard the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) say, "The mosque is every pious man's home. Allah grants the one whose home is the

mosque mercy and safe passing on the *Sirat* to His satisfaction in Paradise." (Narrated by At-Tabarani). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, "If anyone is familiar with the mosque, Allah will be familiar with him." (Narrated by At-Tabarani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade those who had eaten onion or garlic or anything of an offensive smell in the mouth from entering mosques. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He who eats of this plant, i.e., garlic, should not come to the mosque," and, "He who eats of this plant, i.e., garlic, should not approach us or pray along with us." (Narrated by Muslim).

May Allah protect us from anything of an offensive smell, as it harms the angels. If this is the case with onion and garlic, what about smoke and cigarettes, which do not have the benefits of garlic and onions but are full of dangers and harms?

We pray to Allah to make us among those who, when they listen to anything that is said, follow the best of it.

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